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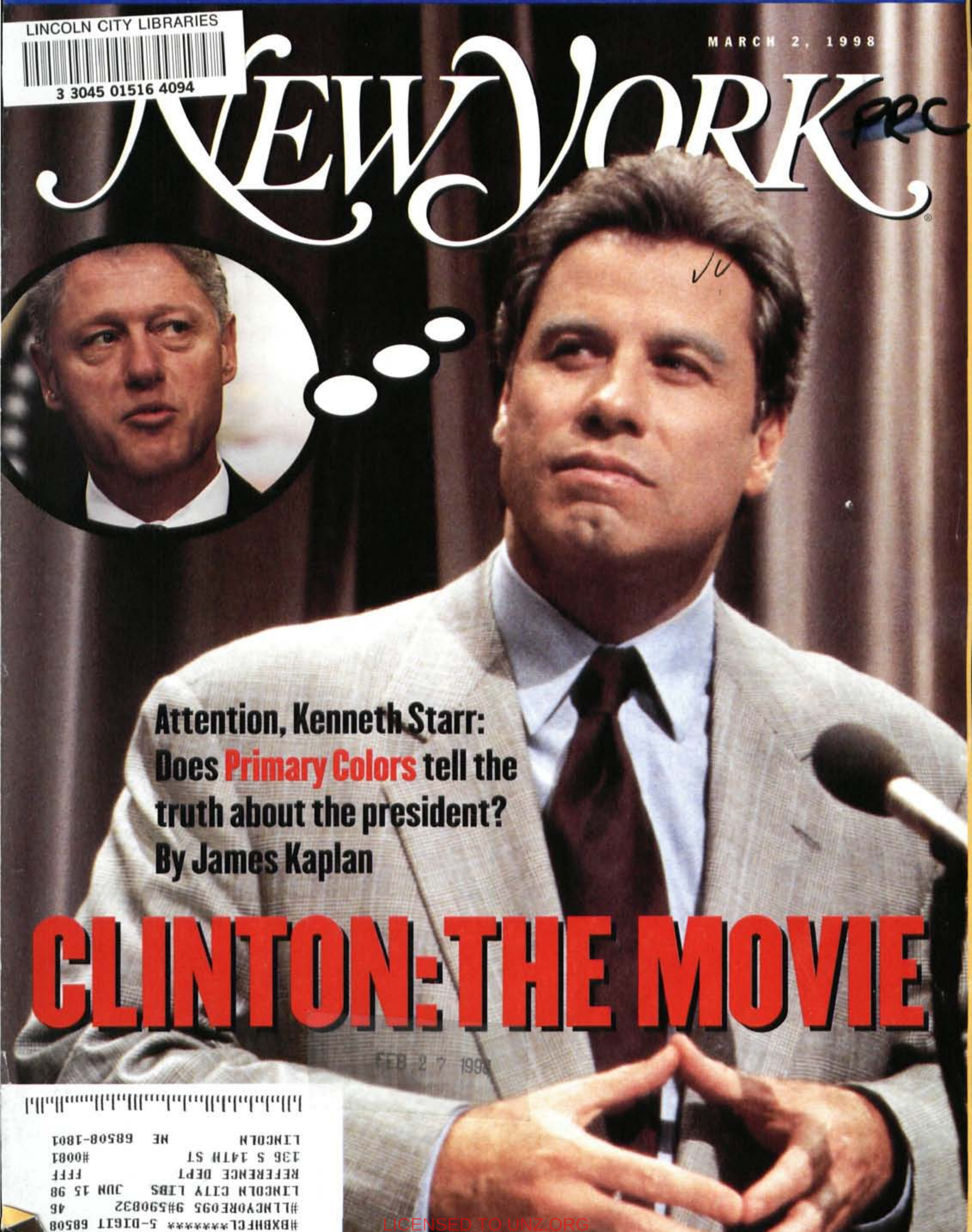

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By James Kaplan

CLINTON: THE MOVIE

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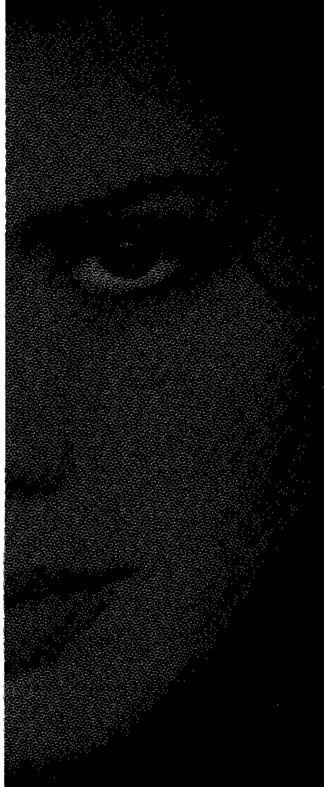

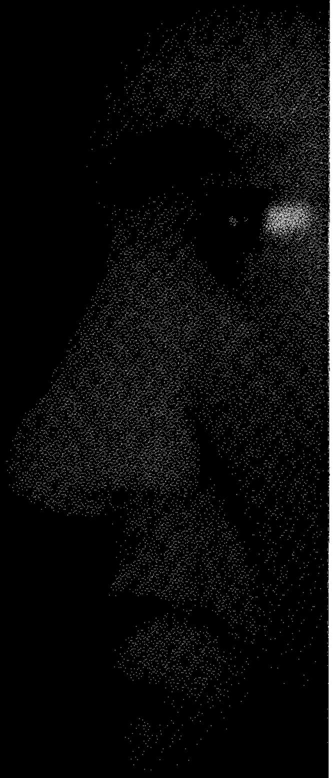

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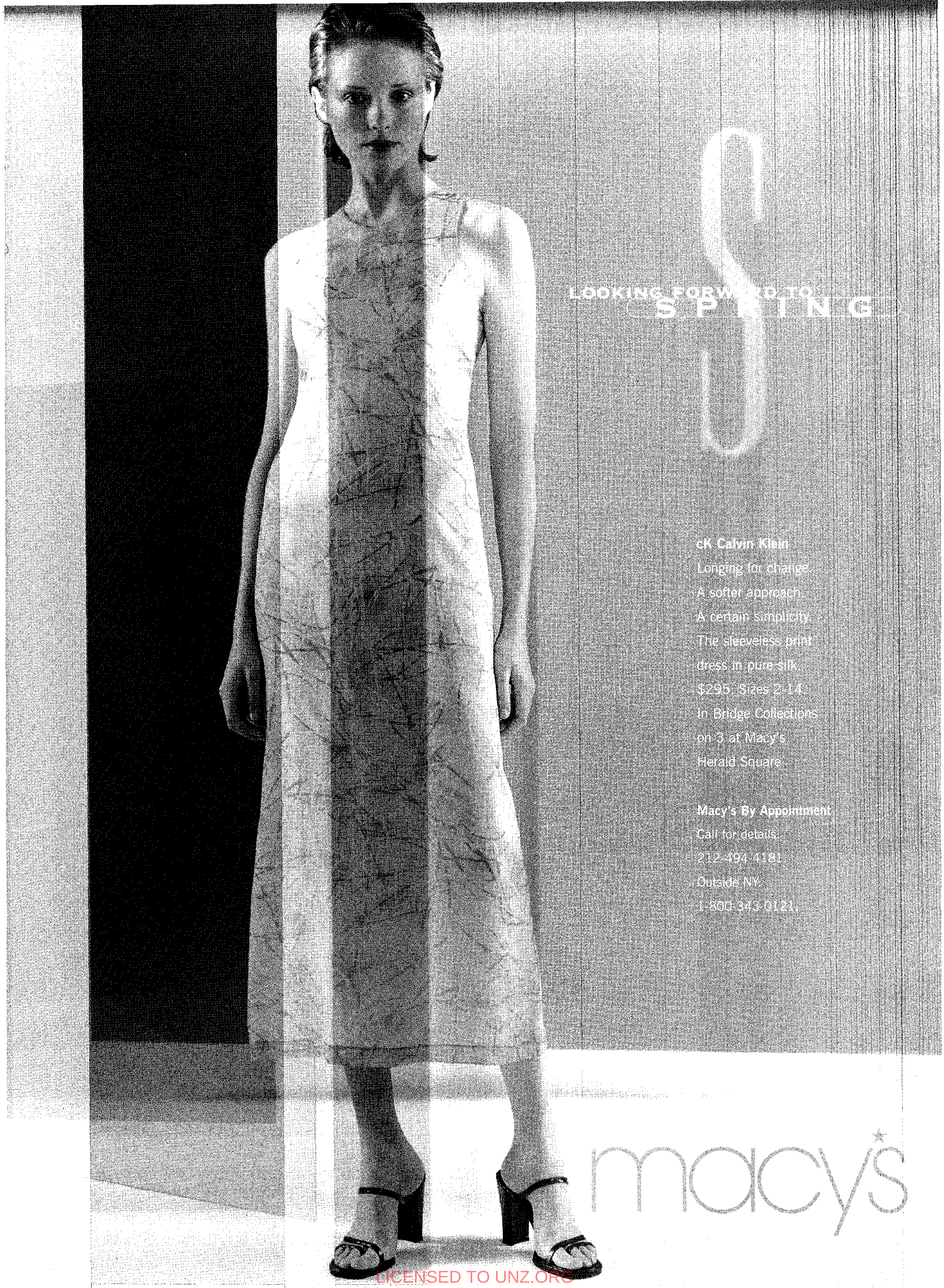

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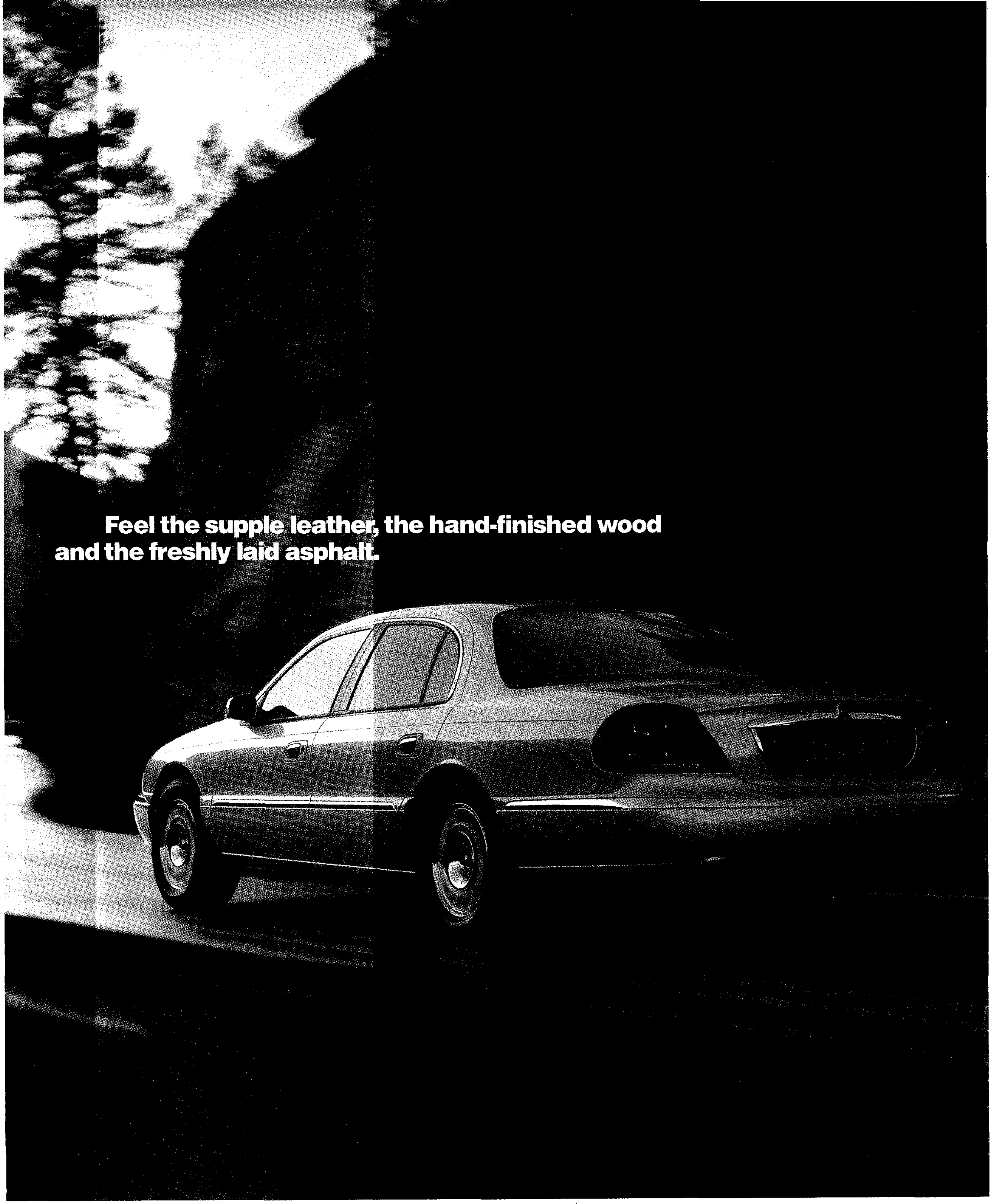
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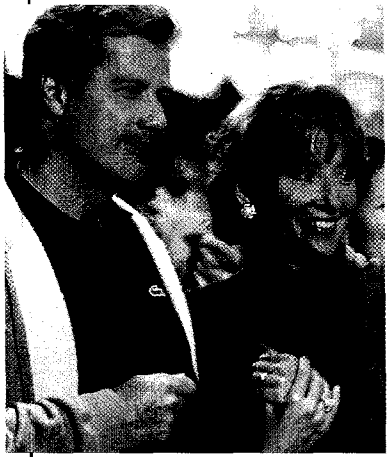
Contents Mar. 2, 1998

> *"We're the only place in civilization that makes this schism: 'He's a great man. . . . Unfortunately he can't keep his pants zipped.' What if it's the same thing?"*
>
> MIKE NICHOLS, PAGE 22



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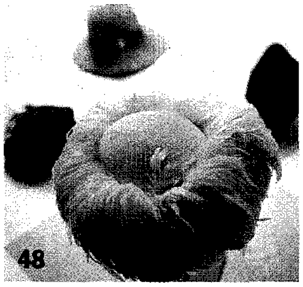

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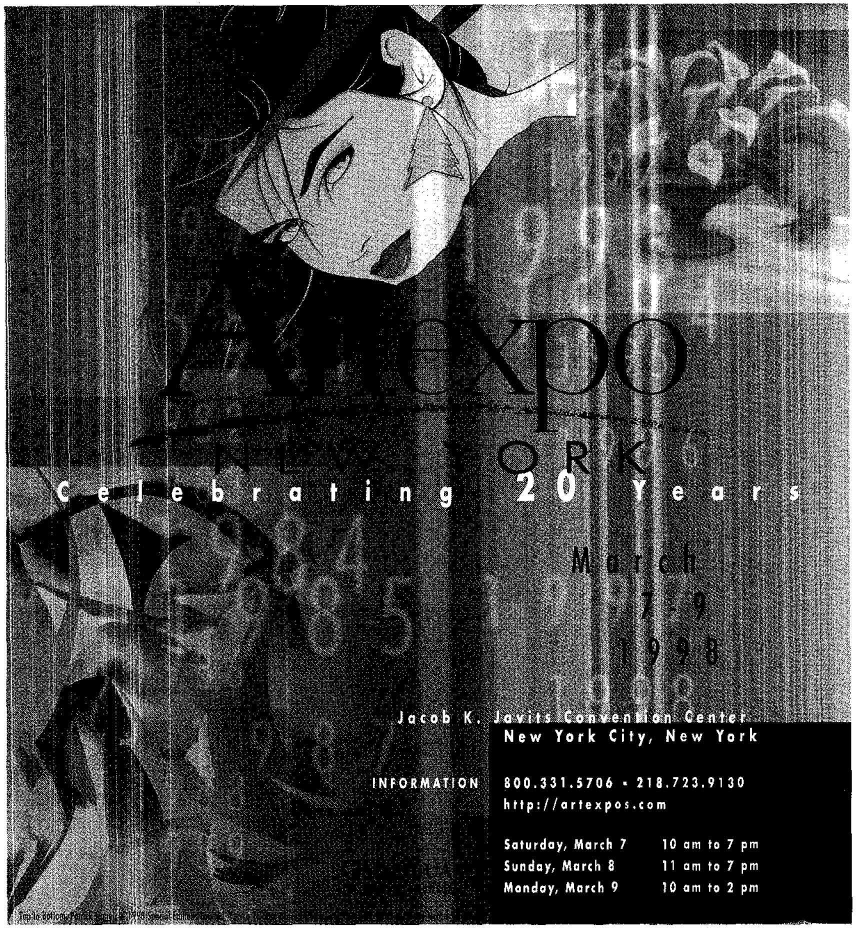
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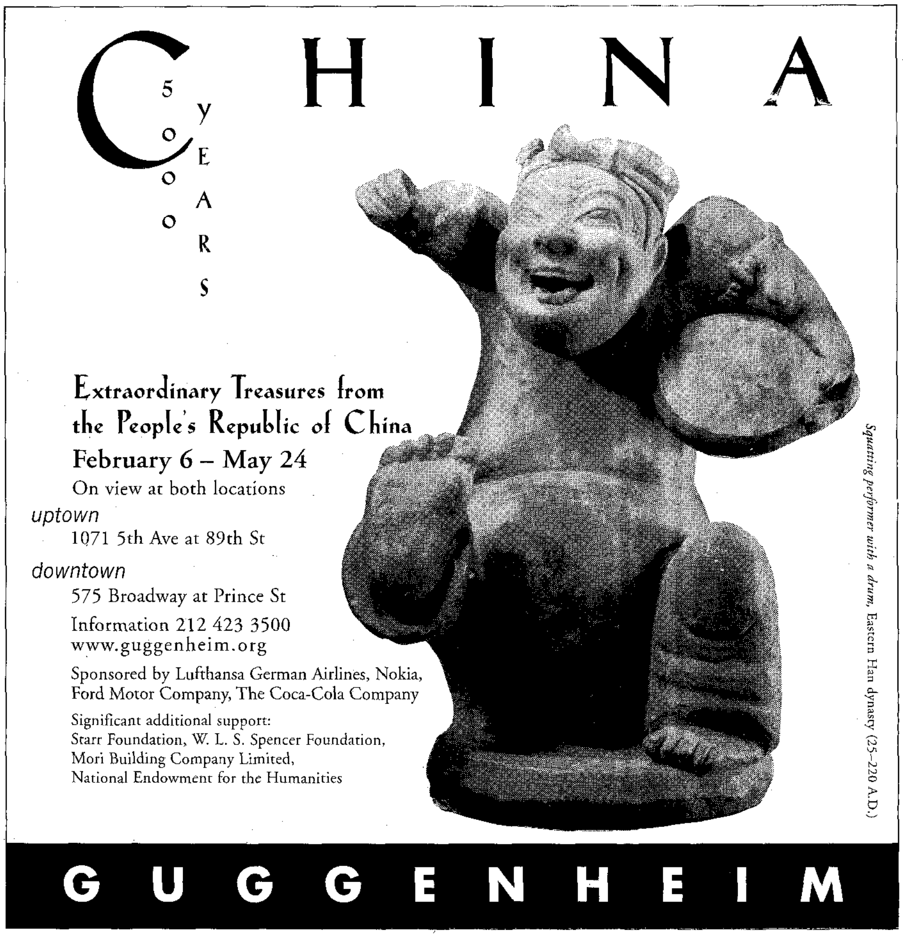
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LESLIE LAURENCE’S ARTICLE “THE BARgain Baby-maker” may actually direct New York’s infertile population toward more expensive rather than discount treatments [February 9]. GynCor’s attempt to streamline care fails because it confuses affordability of treatment with cost-effectiveness of results. Any analysis of cost-effectiveness must take into account the wide range of success rates of the in vitro–fertilization programs described in the article.

An analysis of the outcomes of 100 patients treated, based on the success rates and costs quoted by Ms. Laurence, indicates that Dr. Sauer’s Columbia clinic may not be more affordable. At Columbia, most of these patients are likely to require multiple IVF cycles to become pregnant: Taking into account Columbia’s live-birth-per-transfer rate of 18 percent, only 18 patients would expect to have a baby after the first IVF cycle, 15 after the second, and 12 after the third, with a total treatment cost of approximately $2.7 million for these 45 births ($60,000 per baby). In contrast, those same 100 patients treated at either New York University Medical Center or New York Hospital–Cornell Medical Center would produce approximately 49 live births from the first cycle of IVF, at a cost of only $1.3 million ($27,000 per baby).

Mary-Ellen Macksoud
Vice-president, Stone Ridge Partners
MANHATTAN

LIKE 5–10 PERCENT OF ALL PATIENTS TREATed for infertility through hormonal stimulation, I developed a fluid imbalance as a result. If my doctor had not performed all the bloodwork, I would be dead. The type of cutbacks in blood testing Dr. Sauer is suggesting would put women at risk. How can he say he wants to help women when he will be putting them in such danger?

Mindy Siegel
LIDO BEACH, N.Y.

Letters may be edited for space and clarity. They should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, New York *Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022-6999, or sent via e-mail to 104700.2560@compuserve.com. Please include a daytime phone number.*

LESLIE LAURENCE’S ARTICLE “THE BARGAIN Baby-maker” was balanced in describing our effort to bring high-quality infertility care to New York at reasonable cost. A few comments are, however, in order: When a competitor is quoted as questioning the quality of care that can be delivered at a lower cost, the public should understand that our dramatic cost advantage is not due to a lower quality of service but is the result of lower overhead. We work in a more economical setup than any hospital can offer.

The value added by GynCor’s management concept is best demonstrated by the fact that in less than one year we elevated clinical pregnancy rates in Chicago to 27.38 percent (1996) and within two years to 33.18 percent (1997) for women below age 40. More importantly, these rates were achieved in more than 1,000 cycles annually and without rejecting patients simply because their poor chances would adversely affect program statistics. Our Florida and California programs, though smaller in size, experienced even higher pregnancy rates.

Norbert Gleicher, M.D.
Chairman and CEO, GynCor, Inc.
CHICAGO

WHAT DONNA HAUPT’S “BREAST EASY” DEscribes is not only the breast service at St. Luke’s–Roosevelt but also that at the medical center it implies is a backwater: Columbia-Presbyterian. Nearly three years ago a new state-of-the art breast service, which Dr. Alison Estabrook helped plan and implement, opened at Columbia-Presbyterian on one floor. On the tenth floor of Atchley Pavilion, a woman can have state-of-the-art mammography; visit surgeons, oncologists, a geneticist, and a psychiatrist; have a surgical biopsy; often get a same-day pathology report; and have one-to-one support from a breast-cancer survivor (or a survivor’s husband) in the Women at Risk Resource Library.

Davida Deutsch
MANHATTAN

THANK YOU FOR SHOWING AN EXAMPLE of the excellent cosmetic results that can be achieved after mastectomy [“Surgery Without Scars,” by Donna Haupt]. A woman *can* be made to look and feel whole again. Dr. Lloyd Gayle performed Jacqueline Golub’s reconstruction and deserves credit for the beautiful results. As a medical oncologist specializing in breast cancer, I hope that many women will be less afraid of the outcome of breast-cancer surgery as a consequence of your article.

Bonnie S. Reichman, M.D.
MANHATTAN

I HAD LAPAROSCOPIC SURGERY FOR ADvanced (Stage III Plus) ovarian cancer on December 26, 1996 [“Less Invasive Ovarian Surgery,” by Nancy Wartik]. The surgery was performed at the Arizona Cancer Center by Drs. Kenneth Hatch and Alton Hallum. They were conducting a clinical trial that consisted of intraperitoneal chemotherapy using Taxol and Cisplatin. To date, I am cancer-free and scar-free. I am getting on with my life, but in the back of my mind there is this little voice that says, “This terrible thing will reappear.” Anything that could eliminate the mutilation and alleviate the fear would be a boon to other women like myself. I am telling everyone I know to become part of this new clinical trial.

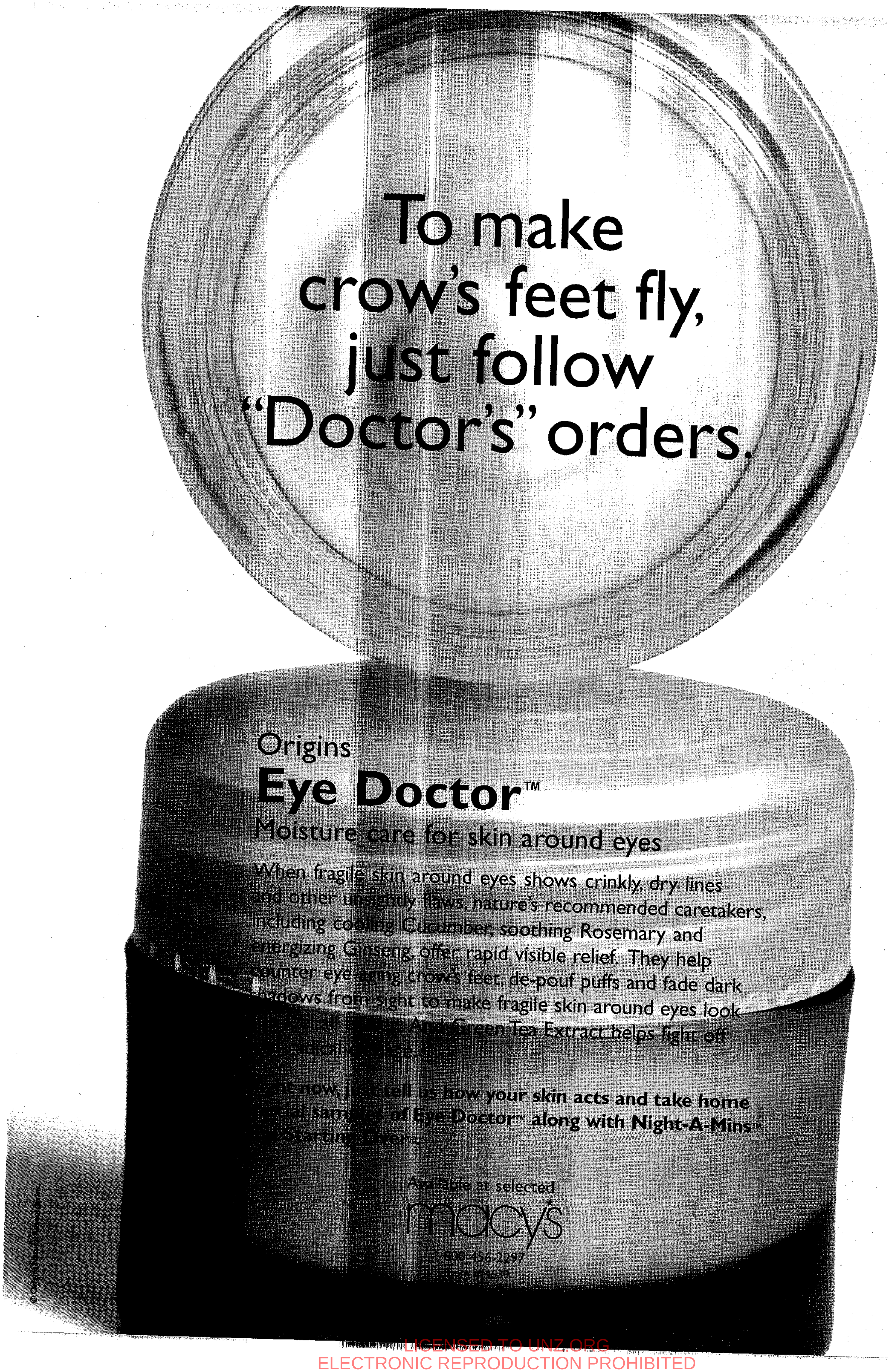
Marilyn Wolf Fisher
MANHATTAN

Taste Test

UNTIL NOW, I’D THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY Tab freak alive [“Gotham Style,” February 9]. Any fastidious person can tell you Tab tastes about 500 percent better than Diet Coke. But what really kills me is the arbitrary decision of the New York–area distributor to stop offering Tab in two-liter bottles. It happened several years ago, Lord knows why, and since then, you just have to hope you can find those elusive six-packs. Dumb old Coca-Cola should be so lucky to have any other product that sells itself without advertising or any other help, except from its own thirsty fans!

Gerry Muir
MAMARONECK, N.Y.

Correction The telephone number for Le Tableau is 260-1333 [“Restaurants: Vive La Résistance,” February 16].



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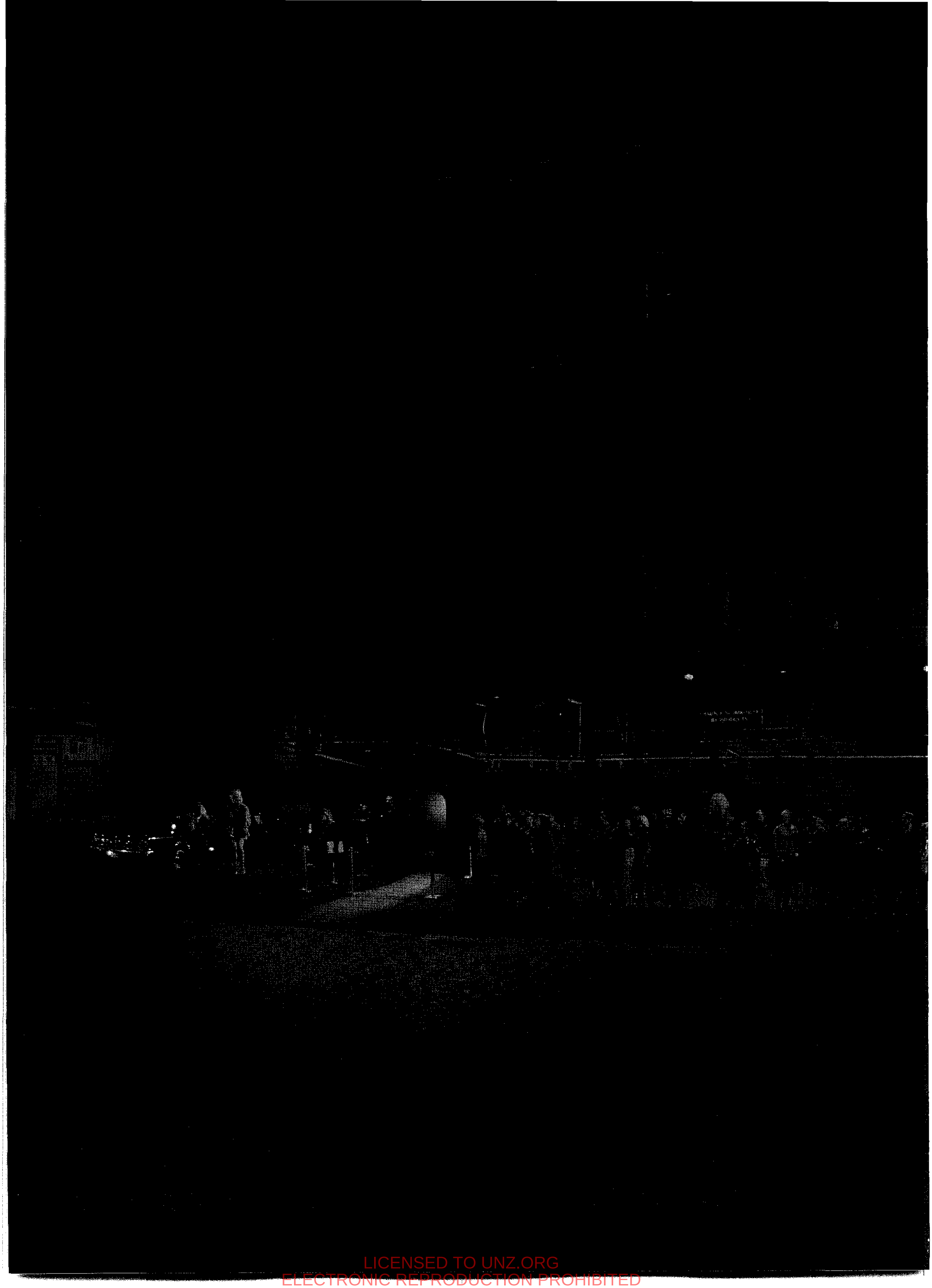


BY BETH LANDMAN KEIL AND DEBORAH MITCHELL

INTELLIGENCER

SCHUMER SHOWS HIS PRIMARY COLORS

Maybe Senate hopeful **Chuck Schumer** should stick to shaking hands and kissing babies. At a recent gathering of the Queens Gay and Lesbian Democrats, Schumer exploded after being asked about his vote for the Defense of Marriage Act, which states that the federal government will only recognize heterosexual marriages. When **James Reilly,** a gay man in his fifties, explained that he and his longtime partner feared they would one day be placed in separate nursing homes since they have no legal status as a couple, Schumer "totally lost control," says the soft-spoken Reilly. "He kept shouting, 'After all I've done for *you people,* you people keep harassing me because of this one damn issue.' " **Matt Foreman,** executive director of the Empire State Pride Agenda, present at the event, took Schumer to task. "I told him he needed to respond in a sensitive manner and show some respect and compassion for that man's emotions," says Foreman. Schumer's apology—when it finally came, about twenty minutes later—"was qualified and couched," says Reilly, "like 'I'm sorry if it seemed like I didn't understand your concerns.' " Responds **Hank Morris,** Schumer's spokesman, "Chuck has spent his career fighting for gay rights, from writing the hate-crimes law to creating housing for AIDS victims. He simply wanted to discuss those issues as well. And when's the last time *any* politician said they were sorry—whether in twenty minutes, twenty days, or twenty years?"

FROM "BAD GIRL" TO JUST *ORDINARY*

Barry Manilow isn't the only disco dinosaur heading to the Great White Way. Seventies siren **Donna Summer** is hoping to bring a new musical, *Ordinary Girl,* to Broadway next year, after a fall tryout on the road. The show, which Summer co-wrote and plans to star in, is "about following your dream," says Summer's rep. "It's loosely autobiographical, because the message is that if you have a talent, you have to be true to it and be empowered by it." Audiences shouldn't hope for a show-stopping finale of "She Works Hard for the Money." *Ordinary Girl* will feature twenty new songs, "but they're still vintage Donna." Summer, who is apparently committed to the show for a yearlong run, is still scouting for a producer.

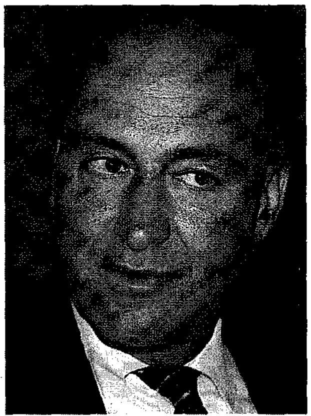
Donna Summer:
Disco lights to footlights

THE MOTHER OF ALL ITEMS

The latest trend among New York's gossip elite seems to be impending motherhood. Hot on the heels of *Daily News* columnist **Joanna Molloy**'s pregnancy comes word that *The Post*'s **Jeane MacIntosh** is six months pregnant; the father is an Australian from **Rupert Murdoch's** empire. Quips MacIntosh: "I'm spawning a hybrid tabloid warrior." MacIntosh's bundle of joy, a girl, is due at roughly the same time as Molloy's baby, a boy, fueling speculation about a possible future dream team of dish. MacIntosh isn't the only "Page Six" alum with a new project on the way. The column's former writer and editor, **Susan Mulcahy,** has signed on as the new West Coast editor of *Self.* "I've done everything—newspapers, the Internet, living in a trailer in Oregon, you name it," says Mulcahy, who founded the Internet gossip site *Mr. Showbiz.* "Finally, I've found a job that will pay me for going to yoga class."

LOVE LOCKED OUT AT WESTMINSTER

Every dog is supposed to have its day, but don't tell that to **Champion Dachsmith Love's Ajax** and **Champion Dachsmith Love's Diomedes.** The two dachshunds didn't even get their fifteen minutes at last week's Westminster Kennel Club dog show—even though their humans, archaeologist **Iris Love** and columnist **Liz Smith,** hosted a dog party at Tavern-on-the-Green. Love and Smith were among a group of owners who thought their dogs were in when the checks for their entry fees were cashed. Then, just days before the show began, they discovered their dogs weren't registered after all, evidently because of a clerical error. "It is disturbing that the most prestigious dog show in the world would have entries handled this way, and that a result is for several of the top dogs . . . to be absent," one disgruntled owner wrote to the show's superintendent. **Chester Collier,** the head of the Westminster Kennel Club, was the stickler who wouldn't let the dogs in even when the mistake was discovered, according to one insider. Love is particularly upset for Ajax, her retiring champion. "He never even got his last show," she says. Neither Collier nor representatives for the Westminster club returned calls.


Chuck Schumer:
Losing his cool

SPORTSMANSHIP, ILLUSTRATED

They may be getting ready to compete for readers, but right now the folks behind *Sports Illustrated* and *ESPN Magazine* have only the sincerest forms of flattery for one another. When ESPN

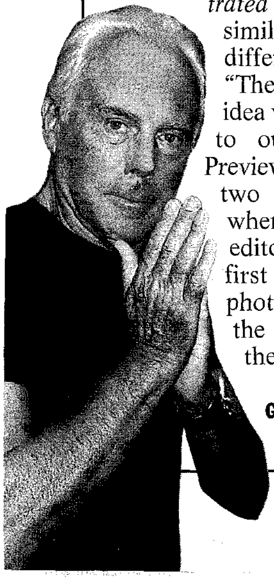
Photographs: top, Fred Prouser/Sipa; James M. Kelly/Globe Photos.

Charlie Rose:
All in the timing

CHARLIE ROSE'S *60 MINUTES* LESSON

Never give a top banana second billing. When **Mike Wallace** was recently slated for the late slot of *The Charlie Rose Show,* he did some fast talking and got the segments switched. While **Charlie Rose** interviewed **Henry Kissinger, Richard Holbrooke, Michael Bloomberg,** and **Barbara Franklin** on the International Monetary Fund's efforts to cope with Asia's economic crisis, Wallace was listening in the green room. On the way into the studio to tape his segment—a discussion of *The Gay Metropolis* with the book's author, **Charles Kaiser,** and former mayor **Ed Koch**—Wallace told Rose how boring the first panel had been. "Well, I've seen a lot of boring *60 Minutes* segments, too," Rose jabbed back. When the segment was over, Wallace started needling his host again. "All right, Wallace," said Rose. "Just this once, I'll let you produce my show." Rose reshot his transitions and flipped the order for broadcast. Rose explains that he's got "huge respect" for Wallace: "You just say, 'Dear God, please let me be like Mike is when I'm 80.' "

created a prototype for its new sports title—set to debut on March 11—it featured three spreads of sports photographs on the opening pages, before the table of contents. "The idea is to capture the reader immediately, with stunning photographs," explains an ESPN spokesperson. But before that idea could see the light of day, *Sports Illustrated* hit the stands February 9 with an issue featuring . . . three double-paged sports photos placed at the beginning of the magazine. Coincidence? ESPN staffers didn't think so—"Let's just say it's very *interesting,*" says one insider—but they're undaunted. "We remain committed to showing sports in a different light," says the ESPN spokesperson. A *Sports Illustrated* rep sees the similarities in a different light. "Their prototype idea was identical to our Olympic Preview issue from two years ago, when our new editor, **Bill Colson,** first used that photo format at the beginning of the issue. He did it *two* years ago, and has been toying with that element ever since." Responds the ESPN mouthpiece: "This incident doesn't concern us anymore. We're concentrating on the launch."



Giorgio Armani:
Letter campaign

GIORGIO'S FLAT; CINDY'S SPAT

A/X TO THE LETTER: Wonder how **Giorgio Armani** landed that $3 million Central Park West penthouse in a building so tony it wouldn't even entertain **Mariah Carey**'s application? The designer went all-out on his co-op board application, submitting reference letters not only from **Liam Neeson** (who lives in the building), **Lauren Hutton,** and **Jonathan Tisch** but also from those who really know his business, like Condé Nast chieftain **S. I. Newhouse,** *Vogue*'s **Anna Wintour,** and **Liz Tilberis** of *Harper's Bazaar.* The letters evidently worked: Armani just got approved.

Cindy Adams:
Proud streetwalker

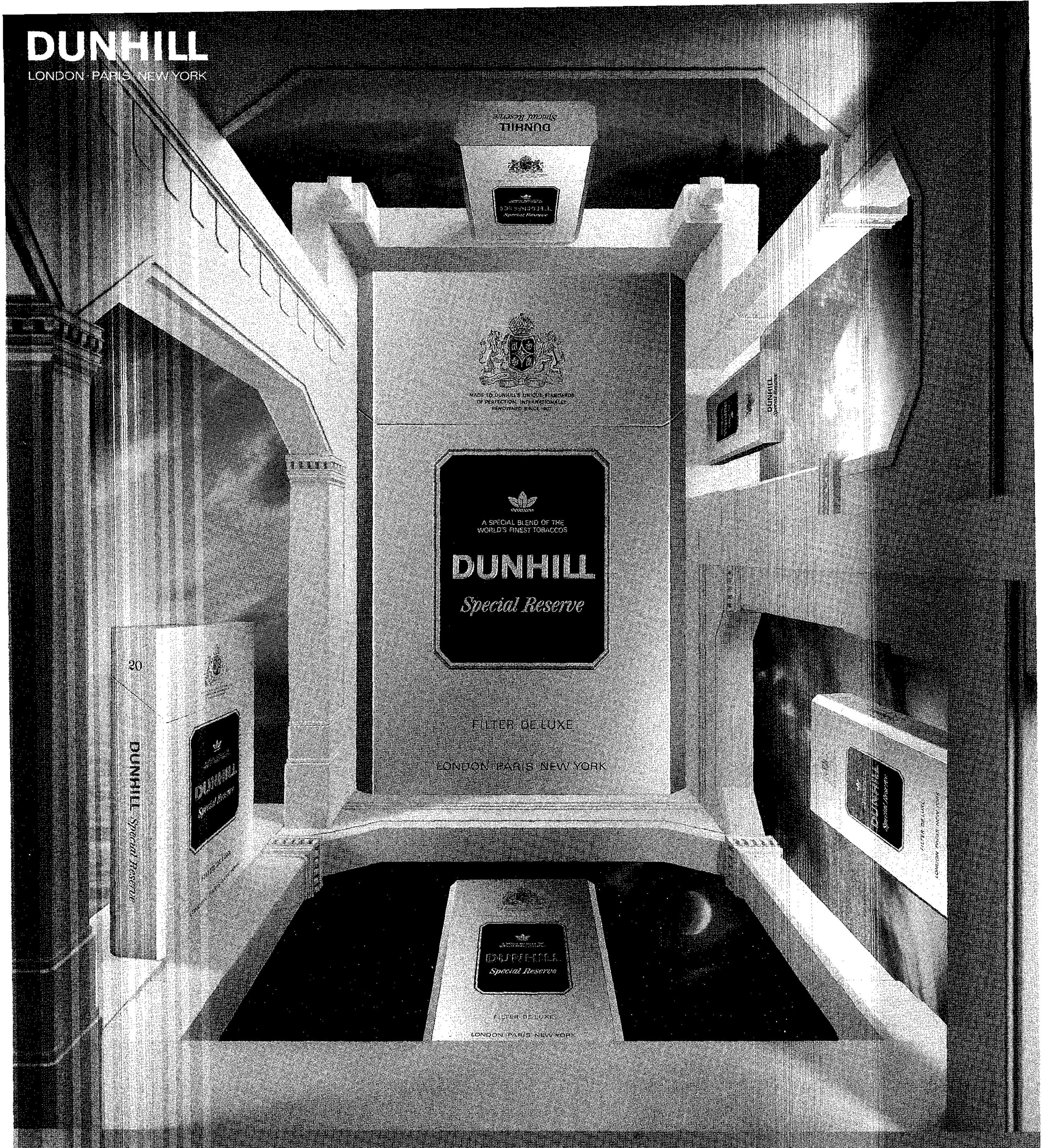
CINDY'S LINE OF CREDIT: Who says **Rudy Giuliani** doesn't have a sense of humor? Not **Cindy Adams.** The *Post* columnist told **Cristyne Lategano** that she'd be sending a $500 check in to Mayor Rudy as an advance against future jaywalking tickets. Lategano reported back to Adams that the mayor thought that was "hilarious." Adams has been crusading against midtown's pedestrian barricades, which force her to cross five streets on the two-block walk from NBC to Le Cirque. "I hate being in this pedestrian prison," says Adams. "I have almost gotten to the point where I would have voted for **Al Sharpton.**" But the canny columnist tempers her tantrums against the mayor. "I always say, 'Our Lord High Emperor, the Commandant of New York,'" explains Adams. "I treat him in ultra-respectful terms, so he doesn't make me a citizen of Bulgaria."

Additional reporting by Kate Coyne and Emily Spilko.

DOUGLAS HAS HAD ONE TOO MANY

The martini-swilling crowd at the Royalton was in for more than the usual rubbernecking when **Eric Douglas,** troubled brother of **Michael Douglas,** was caught up in a fracas in the hotel's chic Vodka Bar. When Eric arrived at the hotel a few weeks back to meet his attorney, **Allan F. Friedman,** a bartender ran over and, according to Douglas, violently attacked the actor. "Both of us were completely sober," Friedman insists. "But this guy grabbed Eric, shook him, and started shouting these accusations—that Eric always caused trouble and was no good—and told Eric to step outside with him." Douglas refused and took a seat. Says Friedman, "It made me cry. Honestly, I was driven to tears." After the incident, Douglas and Friedman wrote to the Royalton's proprietor, **Ian Schrager,** "denouncing this man's behavior and demanding a retraction of his accusations." Friedman says he then received "an anonymous phone call, giving me the address of the bartender, and telling me to 'get that bastard.' " While Douglas hasn't resorted to street justice just yet, his patience is wearing thin. "Between bartenders and airline hostesses—enough's enough," he protests. "I'm really sick and tired of being punted like a football." A spokeswoman for Schrager pointed out that any complaints would automatically be directed to **Brian McNally,** the bar's owner. McNally said he had no knowledge of the incident.

Photographs: clockwise from top left, Gregory Pace/Sygma; Sonia Moskowitz/Globe Photos; Bill Davila/Retna.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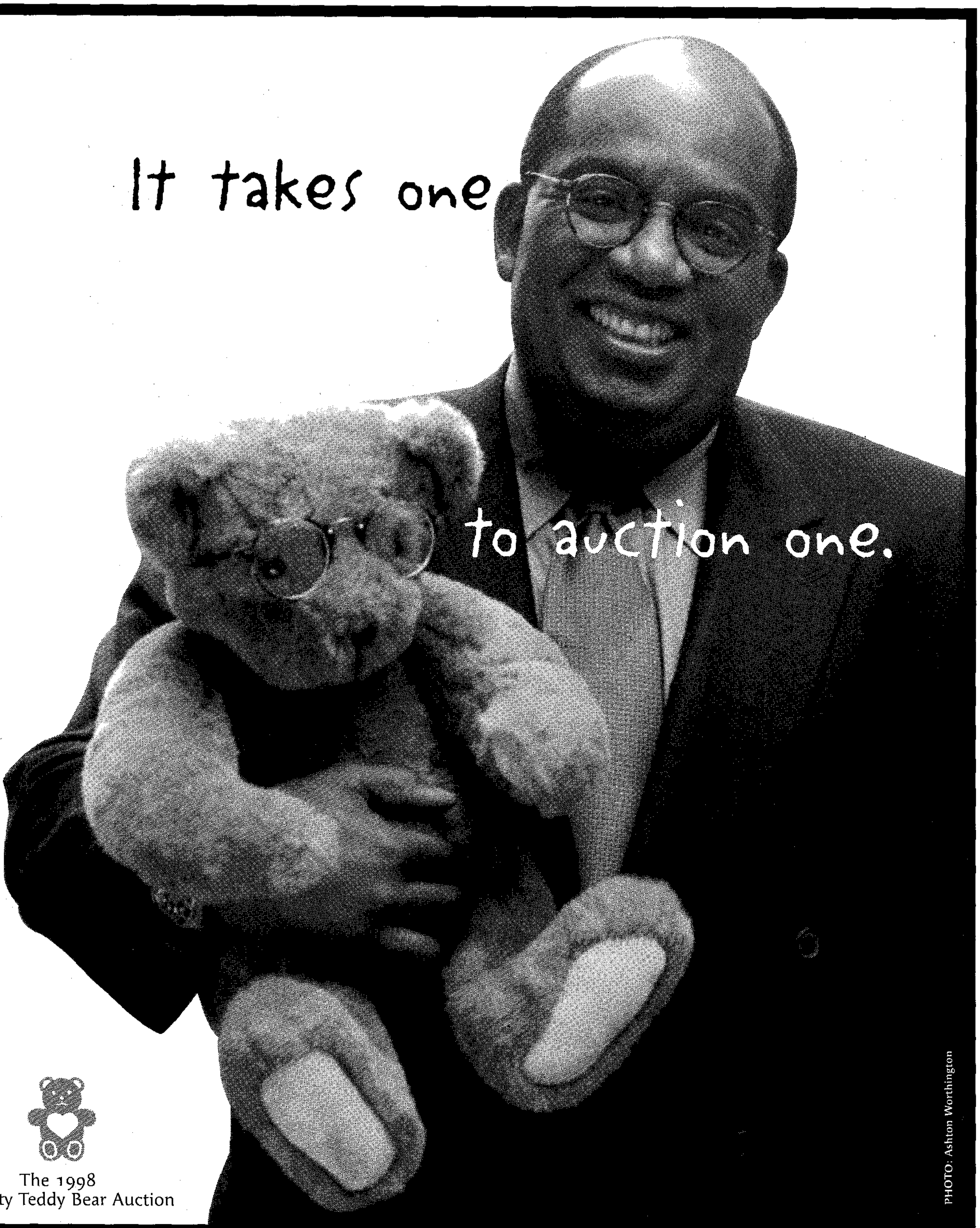

PHOTO: Ashton Worthington

The 1998
Celebrity Teddy Bear Auction

He's cute. He's huggable. And he's up for auction.

It's the 6th annual Celebrity Teddy Bear Auction. On February 24th, join host Al Roker at Christie's and you'll be bidding on bears that look like celebrities, because they've been dressed by celebrities.

Rosie O'Donnell. Muhammad Ali. Hillary Clinton. Al Pacino. Liz Taylor. Wayne Gretzky, and many others.

It's a fun way to raise money for a serious cause. The Greenwich House Children's Safety Project provides prevention and treatment to young victims of sexual and physical abuse.

Even if you can't attend, you can help. For tickets and information, please call Greenwich House.

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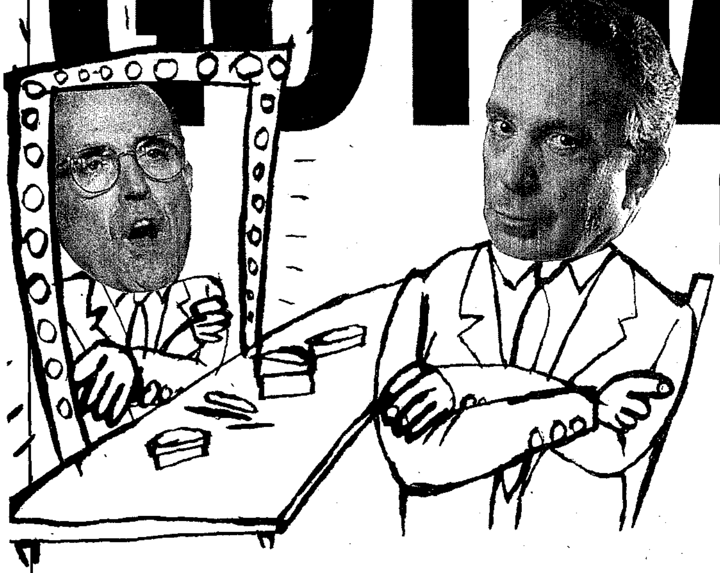


Mayor Bloomberg?

Having conquered Wall Street, the financial giant is eyeing City Hall. Call it Rudy envy.

IT'S NOT AS IF MICHAEL BLOOMberg hasn't done enough to establish himself as a big shot: The sprawling financial empire that bears his name now broadcasts TV and radio shows around the clock. But even he can't help feeling a twinge of power envy when he considers a sweet gig like Mayor Giuliani's, and the apparent right it gives him to carry on like he's *everybody's* boss. So it's no surprise that Bloomberg has been whispering to friends that he might just try for a real loss leader of a second career—mayor of the City of New York. And though he remains cagey about his ambitions when talking to the press, his leave-all-options-open rhetoric strongly suggests the politician within.

"I have worked in this company for sixteen years now," he says. "But I am 55 years old, and down the road, if I had another challenge, and if it was politics, I think that would be fine."

And 2001 could be just the year for it. With Rudy's term expiring and a field dominated by career civil servants (who may just remind voters of Ruth Messinger), Bloomberg—a lifelong Democrat but an untried political entity—would look like a unique alternative.

He could also appeal to Republicans, who may have few options, especially since no Giuliani acolyte seems ready to play Bush to his Reagan. To be sure, Bloomberg has been generous with both parties. In 1996, his biggest check—the legal maximum of $100,000—went to the national Democratic Party, but he chipped in $1,000 to the New York County Republican committee as well as $1,000 each to Republican presidential hopefuls Lamar Alexander and Steve Forbes.

"I have always been a registered Democrat, but I think that makes a lot more difference on a national level," Bloomberg says with a shrug. "The fact that the mayor is a Republican, in a titular sense, is meaningless. When does that ever come up? The City Council doesn't vote together because of party."

He's similarly reluctant to stake out partisan positions, even in his area of expertise, but he's a bit more forthcoming on the subject of education. "I used to be against [school] vouchers. Now I think that I'd probably be a lot more in favor of them," Bloomberg says, almost taking a position that would separate him from potential Democratic rivals. "I am a believer that the public is better off when it has a choice. The wealthy already have the choice."

Regarding his own wealth, Bloomberg—like private-sector-bred candidates before him—claims that, were he to run, his fortune would guarantee his integrity. "It's a disgrace, this attempt to buy access," he says. "I

(continued on page 14)

SPIN CYCLE

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF P.R.

Sign of the Times

● "The swastika-like Manji appears on the front of . . . CBS's prime-time studio in Nagano, and was seen during Olympic coverage last weekend."
—*New York* Post

● "This Buddhist symbol has to do with solar movement. It's important to remember the German swastika goes counterclockwise, but the Buddhist has a clockwise direction."
—*Vishakha N. Desai, Asia Society*

● "Far more apparent was the Nike Swoosh, which was pasted all over the apparel of the network's announcers."
—*Associated Press*

● "That has a pretty big impact for Nike. You're talking about seventeen days of prime-time coverage."
—*Fred Fried, Integrated Sports International*

● "CBS . . . has turned its announcers into billboards."
—*AP Online*

● "CBS did . . . minimize the views of the [Manji] symbol. We would be so lucky if a similar strategy were employed for the Swoosh."
—*The Arizona* Republic

CAMEO

If Sally Field Were a Norwich Terrier . . .

THANK YOU. THANK YOU VERY MUCH. THANK you very much—oh, thank you! I am thrilled to accept this trophy on behalf . . . please . . . hi, Fifi! . . . Rambo: *Grrrr.* Yeah, you *know* it!—on behalf of all Norwich terriers, everywhere, who have a dream . . . thank you . . . a *Westminster Kennel dream!* Oh my Dog. Oh my Dog. You know, they say it's a dog-eat—well, I don't want to lapse into ugly stereotypes, but the show circuit isn't always a walk in the park, and after all these years it feels great to get tossed a bone like this . . . I also especially want to thank my owner, my handler, my trainer, my personal trainer, and, of course, Dog. There are so many I'm leaving out, but I'm looking over at the wings here, and I see—*ha ha*—they've got the leash out, so I'd better heel. But we're going to break out the Eukanuba tonight! Thank you!

Illustration by Scott Menchin; photographs by Najlah Feanny/Saba (Bloomberg), Ron Haviv/Saba (Giuliani). Bottom photograph by Ron Frehm/AP/Wide World.

Bloomberg *continued from page 13*

could run and pay for the campaign myself.” But other mogul candidates haven’t fared well with New York voters. In 1989, cosmetics heir Ron Lauder blew $13 million on one of the more embarrassing mayoral bids in memory. In 1994, upstate millionaire Tom Golisano invested $10 million in his run for governor and got a return of 4 percent. Free-spending Rite-Aid boss Lew Lehrman came the closest, chalking up 48 percent of the vote in his 1982 governor’s race against Mario Cuomo.

Political insiders are split on the idea of a Bloomberg candidacy. “There are enormous liabilities to being an amateur in the business,” says consultant Norman Adler. “He’s a smart man who made a lot of money. Who cares?” But Hank Sheinkopf, who advised Fernando Ferrer on his abortive mayoral bid last year, says Bloomberg “has advantages. His name is broadcast every 30 seconds; he can raise the money. That makes him a player.”

In any case, several hurdles remain before Bloomberg could formally declare his candidacy. For one thing, he still owns 80 percent of a privately held business. When asked if he would sever his ties to the company he built, he responds stiffly, “The company would probably do even better should I cease to serve as its CEO for any reason.” Another obstacle could be his reputation as a playboy, of which he is apparently proud. “I am a single, straight billionaire in Manhattan,” he told the *Guardian* last year. “It’s like a wet dream.”

Still, he maintains that politicians “should be the role models for us . . . symbols of how we should lead our lives, not just people who make decisions for us.” As he says this, a watery-eyed look of idealism softens his hawklike countenance. It’s the look of an unreconstructed Eagle Scout, like something he might’ve picked up from watching Clinton. For a guy who’s too busy running a business to talk at length about running for mayor, it’s as close to a confirmation of his candidacy as we’re going to get for now. Alex Williams

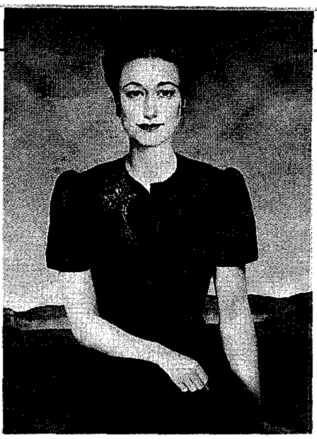
THE CRITIC’S EYE

The Burden Of Gilt

The auction lays bare the Windsors’ sublime irrelevance

With more than 40,000 of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor’s possessions to display and dispose of (compared to 6,000 for the Jackie O. pig-out of 1996), Sotheby’s has temporarily turned itself into a theme park dedicated to—what? To imperial splendor, to pathetic irrelevance, to shopping and fucking, and, yes, to undying devotion.

Three images from the collection (the auction continues through this week) are particularly evocative. Alfred Munnings’s 1921 portrait of Edward, as Prince of Wales, astride his favorite hunter, is a dreadful painting (Munnings was no Stubbs), but it reveals something of the young Prince Charming’s diffidence and appeal. A faded photo recalls an era when it was still possible to contemplate the royal family without snickering: The P.O.W., touring the African colonies in 1928, presents his portrait to a group of Suk tribesmen; they carry spears and look gravely bemused. Finally, there is the portrait by Gerald Leslie Brockhurst of a not-so-young woman wearing a severely tailored deep-blue dress. Her gaze is steady, her expression quizzical, even challenging. “I have cost you dearly,” she might be saying. “But I will amuse you and take care of you forever.”



Portrait of the Duchess of Windsor, est.: $70,000–$90,000.

Fashion, of course, obsessed them both. But the Sotheby’s sale suggests that he was the true clotheshorse, nursing a passion for pink plaid golfing outfits, flamboyant tartan suits, and outrageously baggy plus fours, and giving his tailors precise instructions to make the left rear trouser pocket slightly bigger than the right, the better to accommodate his cigarette case.

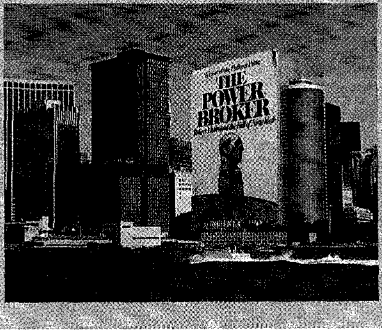
Then there is the Hitler thing—or rather, there isn’t. For all its exhaustive inventory, the exhibit reveals almost nothing about the Windsors’ flirtation with the Nazis, which included a personal inspection of the elite Death’s Head corps and several hours of schmoozing with *der Führer.* The British government regarded these indiscretions as so potentially embarrassing that when World War II began, the couple were spirited off to the Bahamas, where Edward spent five boring years as governor.

So much time, so little to do . . . On their last years together—when they lived as café-society gypsies, sometimes appearing as pay-per-view attractions for charity events—the exhibit is, however, quite eloquent. A grainy blowup of the couple photographed in their Paris foyer shows them smiling gamely, as if to welcome or wave off the hordes who come to examine their effects. Despite the size of the enlargement, they seem insubstantial, a pair of glazed, crackled figurines left too long in the kiln. Sidney Urquhart

PUBLISHING

The Power Book

Ever since it was published in 1974, *The Power Broker,* Robert Caro’s best-selling biography of Robert Moses, has cast a shadow over New York’s urban historians. But 1998’s centennial of the city’s charter presented an unusual tie-in that might have boosted their work into contention with Caro’s. If only they had met their deadlines. “It would be nice if this thing were here now,” admits Mike Wallace, a professor at John Jay College, referring to *Gotham: A History of New York City,* which he and his coauthor now hope to finish by the fall. His publisher at Oxford University Press can’t conceal her impatience: “We’ve got Mike’s nose to the grindstone,” she says.



Daniel Czitrom, a professor at Mount Holyoke College, hasn’t been able to get his *Mysteries of the City: Politics, Culture and the Underworld in Turn-of-the Century New York* finished, either. “I confess to being delayed by several things, like having my second kid,” says Czitrom. And Ric Burns, whose ten-hour documentary was to air on PBS this fall, won’t be ready until 1999.

All of which leaves *The Power Broker,* with a little helpful “re-promotion” from Random House, more powerful than ever. “I walked into a party the other night, and I realized this group of six people were all reading it,” says Caro. “It’s just like it was a new book. It’s been very satisfying.” Ruth G. Davis

Photographs: top, courtesy of Sotheby’s; bottom, Steve Wisbauer (book), Spencer Jones/FPG (skyline).

NICE JEWISH BOY SEEKS HOT-BLOODED JEWISH GIRL FOR LOVE IN COLDER CLIMES
THE FINAL CHAPTER

IT'S BEEN A LONG FIVE MONTHS for Jay Ramras, the Alaskan restaurateur who moved to New York to find a Jewish bride, but after 87 first dates, twenty MetroCards, and $16,250 in rent, New York's most famously available bachelor is finally heading home to Fairbanks.

Though he's not wearing a ring, his search has paid off: He is, to put it mildly, crazy about the woman he met two weeks ago at Barney Greengrass. "Last weekend was probably the nicest I've ever had in my entire life," he kvells, adding that he plans to continue dating her from across the continent.

As he packs up his Upper West Side sublet, he's been reflecting on the quest that, as chronicled in these pages, landed him on *Good Morning America,* CNBC, and *Fox 5 News,* as well as in *People,* the New York *Times,* and *USA Today.* As he says, "It's my fifteen minutes stretched to half an hour."

And in that short period, he took more women out than in all his previous 33 years combined. In most cases, his high profile made it easier to meet people: "They'd give me their phone numbers on the street when they recognized me." But many times, it made the process that much harder. "Some girls really shied away from it," he says. "They were afraid they might show up in the magazine." And worse yet, it occasionally attracted women interested only in his celebrity: "A few, like the 'Love Boat girl,' were just curious to see what a guy from Alaska was like."

Jay Ramras, Alaskan Romeo

Along the way, he felt like a Rorschach test for people's perspectives on the city's dating scene. A synagogue congregation that he addressed initially took him for a con artist, and a Yahoo! employee he dated confessed she'd sought him out just to tell him his search was futile.

For now, his only concern is preserving his relationship with that "perfect girl." Ramras is already planning—as gingerly as possible—his first few return visits. "I'm trying not to put pressure on her," he says sadly. "But I come with pressure." And his friends back home are urging him on. "Cards, flowers, phone calls, letters—he has to stay on top of it," says one. "He needs to fight." But they may end up disappointed in another way. After all that searching for a girl willing to move to Alaska, he's wondering if he'll ever readjust to Fairbanks himself. "In three years," he says, "I don't know if I'll be living in Alaska anymore." SARAH BERNARD

THE SCENE

Crimson Tide

Photographs by Patrick McMullan

Restaurateurs Warner LeRoy, Sirio Maccioni, and Ken Aretsky at Le Cirque 2000.

Celebrating Martin Scorsese's guest editorship of the February/March issue of *Civilization,* David Bowie, Iman, Scorsese, his daughter Cathy Scorsese, and Helen Morris at Lincoln Center.

dv8-Records' Billy Porter, MTV's Ananda, and singer Duncan Sheik at the Supper Club for Denise Rich's Martha Wash Red Ball.

Parker Posey, Cindy Crawford, and Ashley Judd at Bailey House's tenth annual Valentine's Day auction, held at the Puck Building.

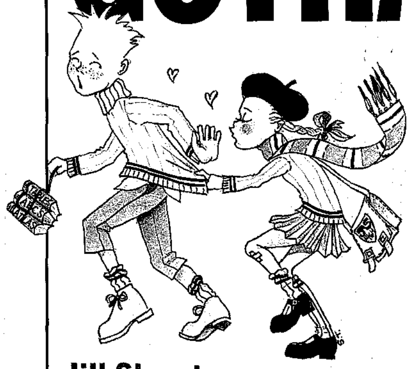
Philip Miller, CeCe Kieselstein-Cord, and guest of honor Isaac Mizrahi at the Waldorf-Astoria for the Lighthouse's annual Winternight party.

Backstage at Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues,* Susan Sarandon, Winona Ryder, Glenn Close, Whoopi Goldberg, Marisa Tomei, Shirley Knight, and Rosie Perez. The performance was a benefit for organizations that fight violence against women.

Photograph by Jason Schmidt.

GOTHAMSTYLE

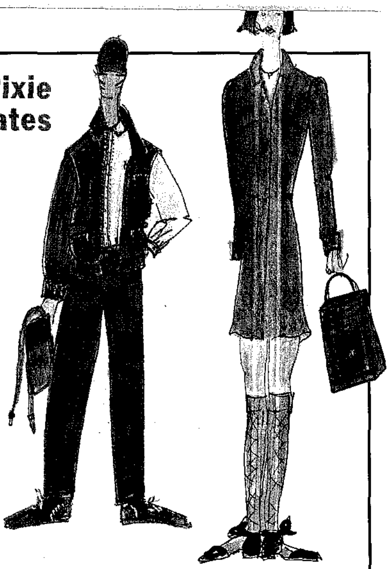
EDITED BY DANY LEVY



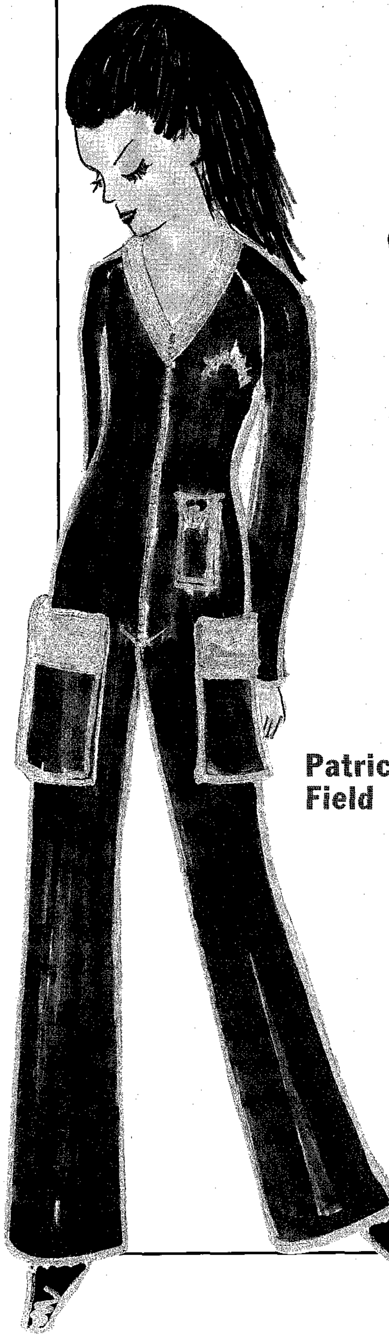
Jill Stuart

New Dress Code

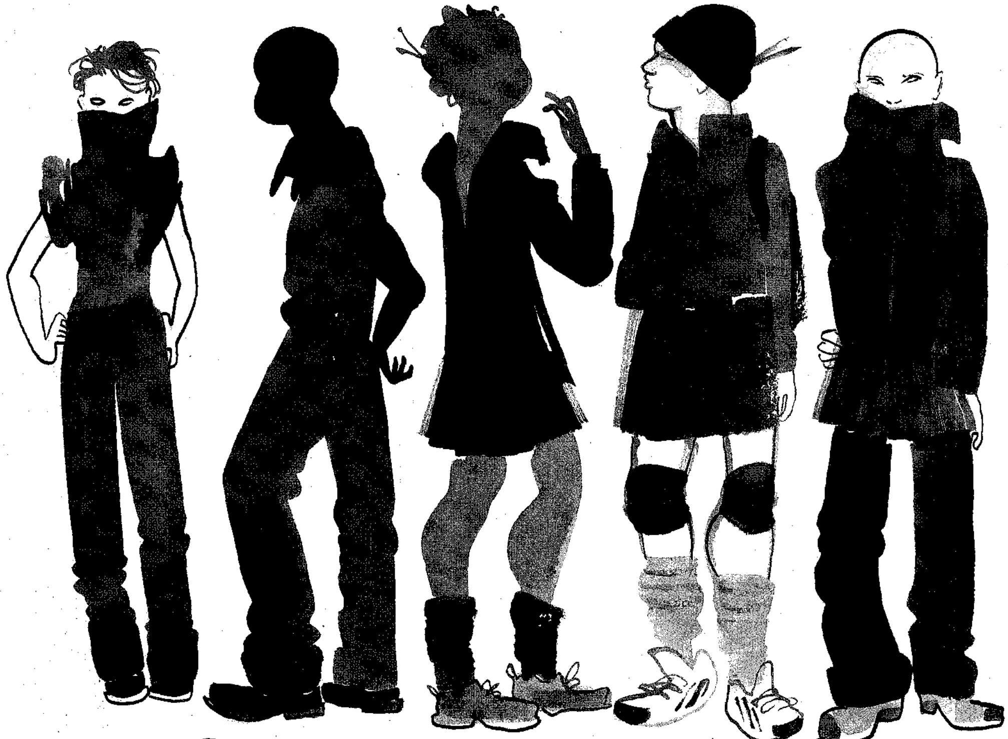
For all the recent debate about uniforms for New York City public-school children, one important question has gone unaddressed: Just what would the uniforms look like? Are we talking about suits and dresses? Prison coveralls? Students aren't likely to be the biggest advocates of the proposed policy, so finding the right look may just make the difference between happy obedience and city-wide fashion rebellion. We asked six designers—all of whom grew up in the metropolitan area—to draw their vision of what the ideal school togs would look like.



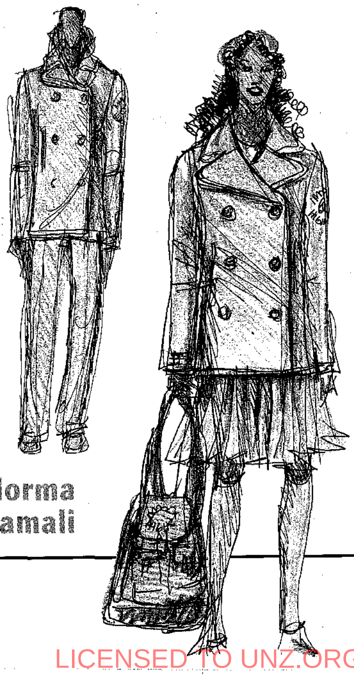
Pixie Yates



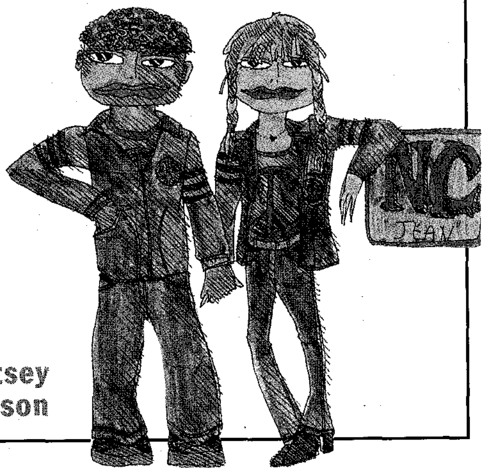
Patricia Field



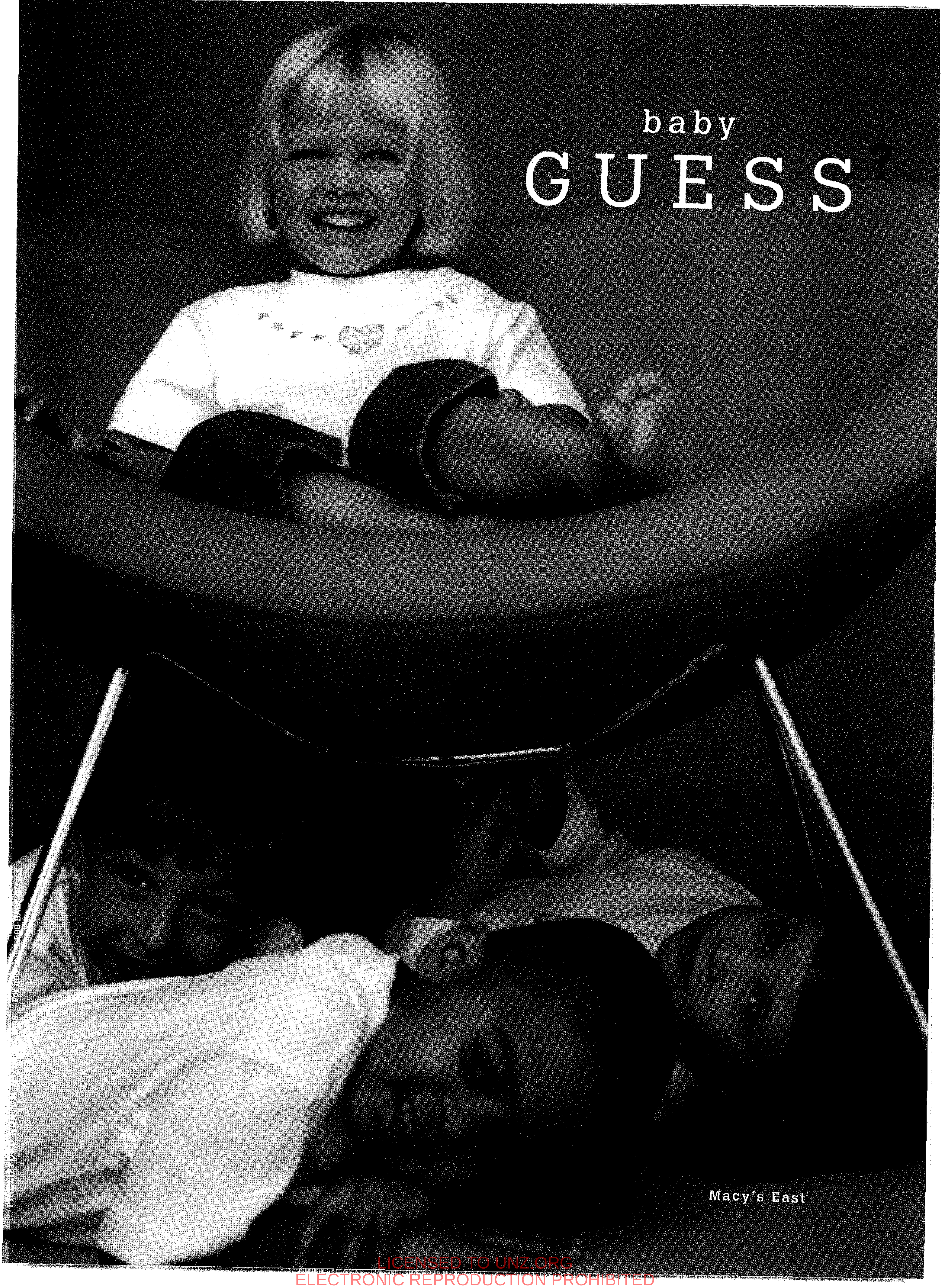
Isabel Toledo



Norma Kamali



Betsey Johnson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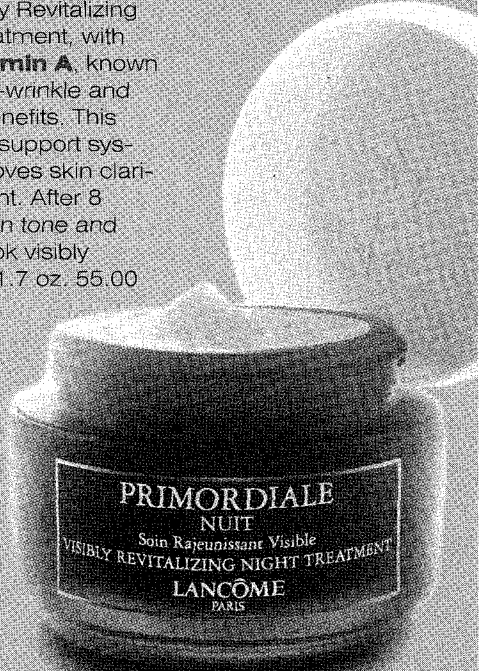
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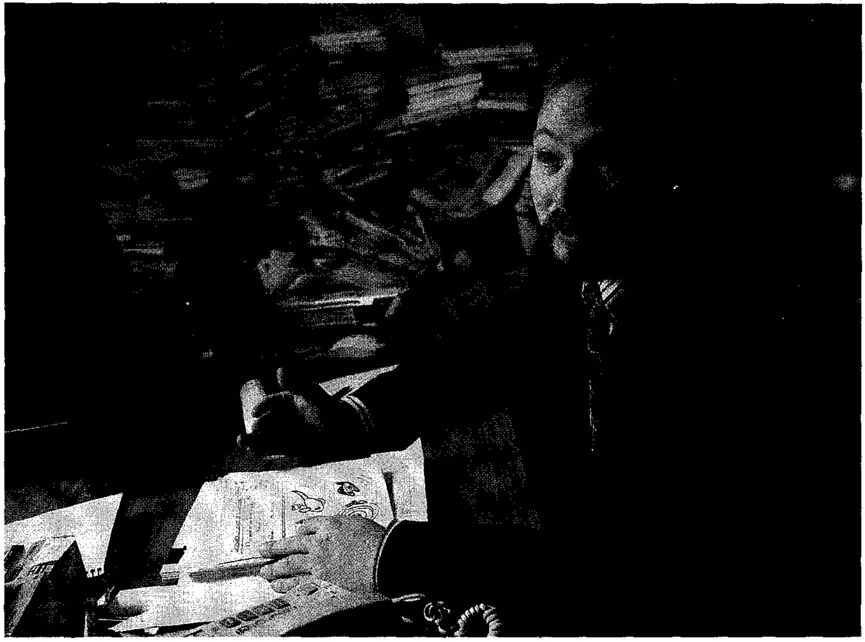
CITYSIDE IVAN SOLOTAROFF

How to Hold Up a Bank

Getting a decent mortgage or loan in the South Bronx was just about impossible until Matthew Lee went to law school at night and started taking on the biggest banks in the country.

MATTHEW LEE POURS COFFEE from a green thermos and begins to write his latest challenge to yet another bank that doesn't really want to lend in areas like the South Bronx. It's a battle he's waged for half a decade, against the likes of Chase and Bankers Trust. This time it's Independence Bank, a Brooklyn mutual savings. A map of the borough is open on his desk, earmarked with flags in areas where Independence has lent money freely. In a long, wide corridor running northeast from the Gowanus Projects, there isn't a single flag.

A telltale smell is making life hellish in Lee's storefront office near East Tremont Avenue in the Bronx. But it will be a few days before he'll track it down—a super-rat that died behind one of the six-foot piles of affidavits, charts, and population studies generated in his battle with Chase (the bank eventually agreed to earmark $18 billion over five years nationwide for "affordable mortgages," a vague appellation that troubles Lee and causes him to keep constant vigil on everything Chase does). He'll dispose of the stiff gray corpse with the same non-ceremony with which he goes about everything that doesn't concern the South Bronx, state and federal banking regulation, and the exclusion of poor people from the free flow of capital. Lee is a unique character, but to know him is to understand Brezhnev's boast of non-description: "I am not the least interested in my own personality." He has thinning blond hair, wears clothes you can never remember the color of, and speaks in a legato stream of tangents and acronyms as his leg beats a chaotic rhythm under the table. Interspersed are a few bons mots derived from his infrequent exposures to the culture at large: "Gotta go for the gusto." "Silence equals death." At the age of 32, he has never earned more than $11,000 a year, lives with his wife and three children in a basement apartment (rent-free because he's the super), and rarely has a car on the road more than six months at a time.



The paper tiger: Lee, building super, homesteading activist, public-interest lawyer, dressed for court.

You've probably never heard of Matthew Lee, but he's famous enough in his own circles. Homeless men at garbage-can fires on Tremont greet him when he leaves his office late at night. Arbitrageurs with millions invested in banks whose mergers Lee is challenging call him constantly to determine their exposure. Their interests hardly coincide with his, but they know Lee's reputation for frankness. Bank presidents learn about that frankness when they invite him to elegant restaurants and ask what it'll take to make him go away. Basically, he reads the law at them, never noticing the food sculptures on his plate.

The law Lee reads most is the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, which requires banks to lend money in all areas of their charters. When banks file with government agencies (to go public, to franchise, to eat another bank), they open a 30-day window for the public to challenge or comment on the move. Usually, CRA challenges try to document "redlining," the unspoken practice of excluding low-income neighborhoods from loan consideration. Most challenges get quickly squashed. Other filers, whom bank officers accuse of using the CRA as a politically correct form of extortion, go away with a quick six- or seven-figure settlement, which Lee derides as "deal taxes."

Lee, whose name has become synonymous with the CRA, came upon the law in 1993 while leading a South Bronx homesteaders group called Community on the Move. The act's intricacies were daunting enough to get him to sign up for night classes at Fordham Law, but he got the hang of it quickly enough. After nine settlements, he has received loan agreements that are fast approaching $1 billion. He was admitted to the New York State bar last May, and has clients nationwide. One of them actually pays him.

Two years ago, affiliated with or representing other groups, he took his CRA challenges to the national level, squaring off with BancOne, the merged Chase-Chemical colossus, then Travelers. The documentation he forced the banks to turn over showed levels and methods of discrimination that astounded him, and his twelve-hour days grew even longer. By early 1997, his children

Photograph by Joanne Chan.

had developed the habit of waking at 2 A.M. as he came in, playing with him for an hour or two, then nodding off until they had to get up for elementary school. ("They're pretty bohemian," he says.) The branching-out culminated in November, when the Office of Thrift Supervision, siding with Lee, ordered Travelers to lend an astounding $430 million in low-income areas in 42 states. As with Chase, however, the battle doesn't end there. Lee keeps close watch on Travelers' lending patterns to make sure they live up to their commitments.

Bank presidents tend to notice the big settlement numbers, but Lee says the figures miss the point (you actually have to pry them out of him). He respects the power they have as precedent, however. Word of the Travelers commitment, for example, was perfectly timed for his Independence challenge. The New York State Banking Department, after five months of consideration, was moving rapidly toward a $21 million agreement—far less than Lee had hoped for. Out of the blue, Independence vice-president Joe Morgano called Lee at the end of the week and told him it was "very important" to the bank that Lee support the NYSBD's decision. Lee told him exactly what he felt: "The commitment doesn't address the deficiency." Morgano asked what it would take to address it. By Sunday, Lee drafted an agreement for $62 million, then faxed it to the Kinko's down the street from Morgano's house on Long Island. Independence agreed to its terms in full by early Monday afternoon.

> *". . . Homeless men on Tremont greet him when he leaves the office late at night.* Arbitrageurs call him to determine their exposure. *Their interests hardly coincide, but they know his reputation for frankness . . ."*

"Sounds like a poker game," I say. "Were you bluffing?"

He smiles, though my terminology is irrelevant as far as he's concerned. "The commitment," he says, "didn't address the deficiency."

I come up to see Lee every year or two—the half- *(continued on page 80)*

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NEW YORK POST
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True Colors?

Mike Nichols—who's known both Jack Kennedy and Bill Clinton—put all he has learned about sex and power politics into *Primary Colors.* John Travolta gave it his Clinton-esque best. So should Ken Starr call off his investigation?

'We're very weird about our president," Mike Nichols said, with a certain weird prescience, as we sat in his 57th Street office a week before Lewinskygate blew up and spattered the land. "I was thinking about how much the problems of our puritanism are like a kid growing up—you find out that the lady who was always with Dad when you visited wasn't his secretary. And then you say, 'That bastard! How could he do it to Mom?' Then you get a little older and your own life gets lived, and you say, 'Oh, Dad, I wish you were here so I could tell you I understand and I'm sorry I was such a little twit.' " ■ He smiled and raised his eyebrows, looking, all at once and startlingly, like a hopeful boy. Mike Nichols is 66 now, and it comes as something of a shock to see those familiar and eminently caricaturable features—the Holbein nose, the small slitty eyes—re-situated in the round face of a senior citizen. "A lot of people go through that," he said, "and in some weird way, the country has to go through it. We're the only place in civilization that makes this schism: 'He's a great man. He's great with people. Unfortunately, he can't keep his pants zipped.' What if it's the same thing? We have never asked that question. Why haven't we asked this question?" ■ Nichols was explaining why he had decided, in February 1996, to put up $1.5 million of his own money, bidding against several Hollywood stu-

BY JAMES KAPLAN

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIGITTE LACOMBE

FULL POTUS: "I can't really pretend he wasn't a model for it," says Travolta, pictured here in *Primary Colors*.

dios, for the movie rights to the novel *Primary Colors.* Nichols won the auction, not just because of the sum he offered but because, he said, "I had an advantage over a studio. I knew what I wanted to do with [the book]." And because he alone among the bidders had the artistic focus to utter a single magic word about the project to Kathy Robbins, the literary agent of "Anonymous," a.k.a. Joe Klein.

"I said, 'It's about honor,' " Nichols recalled. "In my view, that's movies' favorite subject. The movies I love most—we love most—are about honor. *Lawrence of Arabia.* It's in all the buddy movies. It's deep in the heart of almost any serious movie, because it's always the issue at stake. Movies love friendship. They love unconsummated passion. They love nonsexual love. And somehow honor is always involved."

And what did honor have to do with *Primary Colors*?

"It asks the question, Where does honor lie now, now that things are as we know them to be?" Nichols said. "And what does it take [to be president] now? And who do we lose because of this gauntlet that they have to run? Who's unable to run the gauntlet? And who survives the gauntlet? What have we done? What are we doing? It's really the question that everybody is asking all the time. There is almost no other question."

"IT'S ABOUT HONOR": Nichols directing Travolta, above; Emma Thompson, Travolta, and Billy Bob Thornton in a scene from the film, right.

Photograph by Francois Duhamel/Universal Studios.

THE EVENTS OF THE PAST MONTH HAVE, TO PUT it mildly, borne out Nichols's assertion. And now, in a few weeks, his movie adaptation of *Primary Colors* (its screenplay written by Elaine May) will premiere, in a national climate about which virtually the only guarantee seems to be that questions of presidential honor aren't going to get any less pressing.

Mike Nichols, however, thinks Bill Clinton's problems are less a matter of honor than of a certain fixation on the part of the president's critics and the press.

"I think that there's a complicated mixture of parental and sexual in our contemplation of the president," he says. "Depending, of course, on the president. If he's more parental, we're more parental. If he's younger and still in his sexual prime, then we're more sexual in that response to him. And I think there's all the pain of finding out that Daddy cheated on Mommy.

"It's a very adolescent thing," Nichols says. "Everybody remembers when you're first coming upon sex and you can't understand how people get through their day. I remember that so clearly from college. Why isn't everybody talking about it? And how are you supposed to get through all this other stuff when the nights have this in it?

"In some ways, maybe the [relative] youth of our nation is involved in our confusion about public and private acts. As everybody keeps saying, in France they have no problem. Private acts are private acts. And that's that. They long ago figured out that men who get a lot accomplished have powerful libidos. What's the problem?"

Well, there is a problem, according to more and more professional opinion-givers. There are, of course, the predictable anti-Clintonites on the right, ranging from Richard Mellon Scaife to George Will, who feel that Lewinsky's is just the latest gate in this administration, a cell in a cancer of malfeasance that includes Whitewater, Vince Foster, Travelgate, and campaign-contribution abuse at the very top of the list. There are, of course, Maureen Dowd and Michael Kelly and Sam Donaldson, commenting from somewhere in the unincorporated center, appearing to feel roughly the same way, with a little bit of salt sprinkled on it. Had Clinton only come forth and fessed up immediately after Kenneth Starr Tripped upon Monica Lewinsky, one of the Major Commentators told me last week in Washington, he might very well have been forgiven; it's the steady pattern of Doing Just As He Pleases that will finally sink him.

And then, in his own unique spot on the left, sits George Stephanopoulos, the very picture of disingenuous telegenic regret, battening on the misery of his former idol.

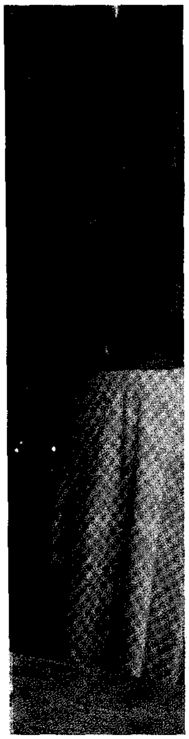
And at the other end of the forgiveness spectrum are the likes of Tina Brown, who, after attending the White House dinner for Tony Blair, gushed, "Forget the dog-in-the-manger, down-in-the-mouth neo-puritanism of the op-ed tumbrel drivers, and see him instead as . . . a man in a dinner jacket with more heat than any star in the room (or, for that matter, at the multiplex)." And Mike Nichols himself, who has socialized with the Clintons in Los Angeles and on Martha's Vineyard, where Nichols and his wife, Diane Sawyer, have a house.

"I've met [the president] about a half-dozen times," Nichols says. "I [first] met him at a fund-raiser that Elaine and I did for them, way before the election, in L.A. And we were both astonished at how present they were. They're very startling when you meet them. It's absolutely the opposite of the experience of meeting the candidate, let's say, and his wife. Or the president and the First Lady. And there's a great remove and a certain amount of boilerplate. Not at all. They're right there. They're like the people you know. They look you in the eye, and they say new things that they just thought of. They're alive. And present. And it's very startling and impressive and nice. They're very, very nice."

Nichols and Sawyer most recently saw the Clintons last summer on the Vineyard: "It was at a big party, and he came over to say hello."

"Did he say anything about the movie?"

Nichols gives me a look. "No," he says. "He asked me about the Vineyard, and I said that I'd been coming there for years, that I used to visit Lillian Hellman every summer, and he said, oh, he wished he had met her. That would have been wonderful. And that he was such a fan of [Dashiell] Hammett, and that he had always thought that if Faulkner wrote detective stories, he



"In France, private acts are private acts. They long ago figured out that men who get a lot accomplished have powerful libidos. What's the problem?"

would have been Hammett. For a president to say that takes your breath away. You know, the last conversation about art that I know of a president participating in was when Eisenhower said to Lenny Bernstein, 'I don't like them airs and barcaroles. Give me a good march.' " Nichols laughs. "He actually said that. Bernstein was beside himself. And he named a composition *Arias and Barcaroles.*"

I ask Nichols whether he noticed any change in the president between the first time he met him and the most recent. "Well, my meetings with him have always been short and casual," he says. "You know, I wouldn't presume, even to myself, to make such judgments. In my mind I have this fantasy in which he is discouraged and figures if we don't let him move in any direction, the hell with it. But I think that is in my mind."

Does all this make Nichols a not-so-crypto Clinton flack? There are those who would put Nichols, along with all those showbiz types, who live by appearances and certainly not by moral fiber, anyway, deep in this charismatic president's pocket. (And he in theirs, as is evident in everything from his close association with the principals of DreamWorks to the guest list of just about any major White House function.)

The movie of *Primary Colors,* the critics would claim, is tainted high and low, and not just by Nichols: They would cite the fact that Edgar Bronfman Jr., who controls Universal Studios (which is releasing the picture), is a major Clinton contributor. They would claim that John Travolta entered into some sort of unholy deal with the president, extracting his promise to help remedy the plight of German Scientologists in return for a sympathetic portrayal in *Primary Colors.* They would charge that Billy Bob Thornton, who plays the James Carville character, Richard Jemmons, in the movie, was brought into the project for similarly nefarious purposes by Thornton's close friend and fellow Arkansan, F.O.B.-in-chief Harry Thomason. . . .

And the critics wouldn't be totally off base. One of the many amazing things about the president is his omnivorous ability to reach out and put the touch on virtually anyone, from David Geffen to a young woman I met recently, the assistant to a well-known (and conservative) media figure, who once found herself, for a heart-stopping few minutes, one-on-one with Clinton. "He acted as if he had all the time in the world for me," she sighed.

WHAT KIND OF MAN SURVIVES THE GAUNTLET of a presidential campaign? *Primary Colors,* the novel, asked the question, at length and poignantly, about its nakedly Clintonesque candidate Jack Stanton, and now *Primary Colors,* the movie, is asking it again, even more poignantly, at a time when the country can talk about little else. At such a time—good God!—of endlessly interweaving rumors and facts and news and parody, isn't a movie that gives us more of the same, in a past-tense factoidal fable of the '92 presidential primaries . . . a bit much?

It isn't. While the tickle of "Anonymous" was in its winking signal that the book's journalistically unprintable gossip was, deep down, really journalism, we've gone a long way down that road in the two years since: Winking signals are scarcely needed anymore. And whatever the tabloids say, *Primary Colors* the movie is neither political fellatio nor artistic failure. It has not been, nor will it be, outstripped by the news.

Yes, it's a treasure house of *à clef* nudges: Travolta and Emma Thompson as southern governor Jack Stanton and wife Susan (the Clintons); Adrian Lester as campaign manager Henry Burton (think Stephanopoulos); Thornton as the Carville-esque strategist Jemmons; Maura Tierney as coordinator Daisy Green (Mandy Grunwald); Kathy Bates as dirt-deflector Libby Holden (Betsey Wright); Larry Hagman as a decent former Florida governor with a besmirched background (take your pick); Gia Carides as whistle-blowing floozy Cashmere McLeod (Gennifer Flowers).

But the chief power of *Primary Colors* derives from the metaphorical light it sheds on the Clintons' true-life characters and relationship, and on what has come to be regarded with a derisive snort as the American Political Process. Beyond the salt-peanuts fun of fantasy-meets-reality (and beyond a picture like *Wag the Dog,* which is pure salt peanuts), *Primary Colors* is—from its first flag-waving moments just before the New Hampshire primary to its final scene at Jack Stanton's inaugural ball, in its perfect pacing and sublime ensemble acting—an artistically independent work.

Much overlooked in the brouhaha over the authorship of *Primary Colors* was the fact that it was no potboiler but a real novel, which Klein (in intricate collaboration with Random House's Dan Menaker) brought off with brio. Yet the book's great weak-

Photograph by Dominick Conde/Star File.

ness is its narrator and central figure, the black Hotchkiss graduate and Stephanopoulos (and Klein) stand-in Henry Burton. He is that obligatory device, the transparent, all-seeing narrator, and—well beyond being an assimilated person of color—is so insistently colorless that we quickly cease to care about him except as a pair of eyes.

The first major contribution Nichols and May made to the film adaptation of *Primary Colors* was to give body and soul to Henry Burton, to make his Candide figure at once our surrogate and a suffering character in his own right. Nichols has done this by casting someone unknown to American audiences, Adrian Lester, a 27-year-old British stage actor with a sweet, open face and arrestingly expressive dark eyes.

From the moment Lester's Henry first appears onscreen, watching in astonishment as John Travolta's Jack Stanton presses the flesh at a Harlem rally, we're with him—and we're with Stanton because Henry is so bowled over by him. As magnetic as Travolta is—and God knows he is magnetic—it is Henry's imprimatur of shock and awe at Stanton's messy amalgam of nobility and primitive appetite that gives *Primary Colors* its real gravity.

"That's the story I wanted to tell—everybody's in bed with somebody. If we're asking for forgiveness, it's nice to remember that everybody's in bed with somebody."

"It seemed to me important for the audience to become Henry as much as possible," Nichols says. "I wanted somebody who was an open book, and I loved Adrian's openness, his innocence, his lack of any anger—it's not so easy to find in a young actor."

The fictional Henry is the son and grandson of Great Men who are something like Martin Luther King Jr. and Sr. "Henry has an awful lot of baggage," Adrian Lester says. "His father and grandfather made a difference politically and socially. And Henry wants to be a part of history, too, but doesn't know whether the kinds of dreams and hopes and responsibilities his father and grandfather fought for will be around for him. Then he sees this governor and thinks this guy could really change the face of America.

"One of Mike's concerns throughout," Lester says, "was that there should be no point where you think Henry's sold out. You should always be wondering if he's sold out or not."

A scene in Klein's book where Susan Stanton comes to Henry devastated by her husband's latest infidelity, then winds up sleeping with the campaign manager, was shot but later cut from the movie. A "Page Six" item in the New York *Post* claimed that pressure from "Universal biggies" was responsible for the cut, a charge Nichols reacts to sharply.

"Oh, it's all so pathetic, this fiction," he says. "*I* have final cut. They can't insist on anything. I think it's about fifteen seconds that's gone. And it was a little more explicit than it should be under the circumstance—it was very disturbing, because you expected Susan and Henry to remain the good guys. So now it's up for grabs, if you want to think it happened. But we're not saying it happened."

According to Adrian Lester, vox populi made the decision. "During the test previews, people were going, 'Oh, no, Henry, don't,' " he says. "He'd crossed the line."

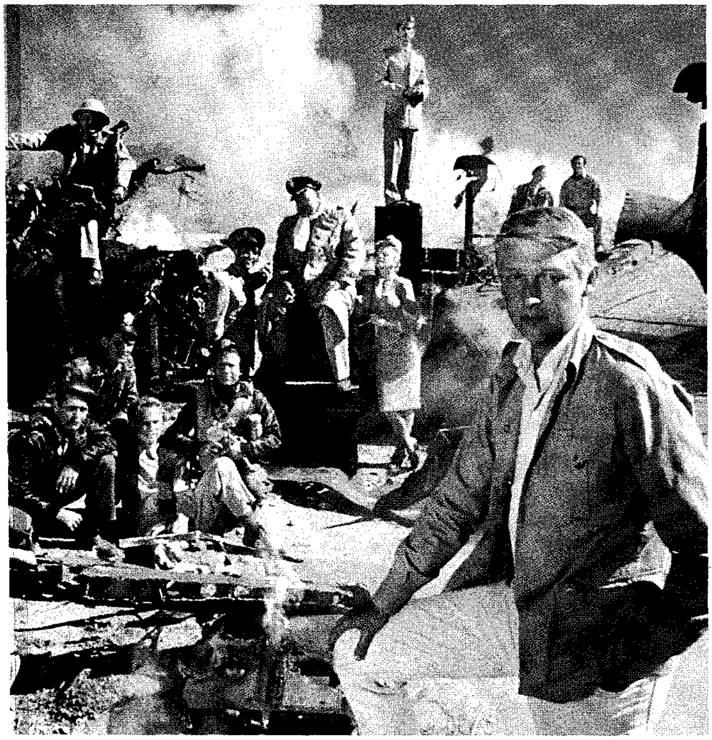
Primary Colors is constantly flirting with one line or another, particularly the boundary between fact and fiction. "I knew there were risks in making the movie," Emma Thompson says. "The connections to [D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus's documentary about the '92 primary] *The War Room* are obvious. The movie did that very risky thing of taking something against the sort of trash barrier—you hope it's going to lift off above it because it presents a moral picture that's genuine, a genuine self-examination."

Thompson says she deliberately set out not to impersonate Hillary Clinton. "I sort of cast her a few glances," she says. "I got out a few bios and thought, *She's splendid,* but wanted to go my own way. It made me much freer." Her chief research, Thompson says, was "inform[ing] myself as much as I could about the American political process and that profoundly bizarre voyage to the White House."

JOHN TRAVOLTA IS ANOTHER STORY. OR, AS LARRY HAGMAN puts it: "Boy oh boy, if he ain't playin' Clinton, it's mighty close to him." Travolta gained twenty pounds for the role; he streaked his hair white. His voice, though, is the biggest tip-off: The hoarse dying fall, warm and smooth as grits and gravy, is Big Bubba to a T. "I can't really pretend he wasn't a model for it," Travolta says. The actor even made the ultimate sacrifice: In one scene in the movie, he manages to bring off the astonishing feat—astonishing for John Travolta, anyway—of dancing like a chunky white boy.

Thompson, Travolta, and Nichols briefly pondered the verisimilitude asymmetry between Jack and Susan Stanton, then decided simply to go with it. The result is—as with Henry Burton—an improvement over the novel that is both considered and serendipitous. For while Klein's Stantons are sharp-edged

Photograph by Mel Traxel/MPTV.



CAREER MOVIES: Clockwise from above, Nichols on the sets of *Catch-22, . . . Virginia Woolf?* (with Taylor and Burton), and *The Graduate.*

(and lightly fictionalized) renderings of real people, the movie's First Couple achieve an almost surreal rightness, a facty fictionality that seems to take us closer to the heart of Hillary-and-Bill (Billary?) than any true-life scrutiny ever could.

In the novel, when Henry meets Susan Stanton for the first time, on a landing field in Manchester, New Hampshire, she tells him his grandfather was a great man—then turns to her perpetually late husband and says, "Jack Stanton could also be a great man if he weren't such a faithless, thoughtless, disorganized, undisciplined shit." It's a terrific scene, but it's one that achieves transcendence in the movie, as Travolta takes his lumps from the strong-willed, clear-thinking Thompson, then snuggles up behind her as she's stalking away, cupping her breasts and cooing a romantic country song into her ear. What happens in the movie that doesn't happen in the book is small but huge: a quick, helpless smile by Thompson that tells the whole story of how besotted she is with this magnetic, irresponsible man.

"To me, the miracle of Emma's performance, even when she's calling him an asshole and slapping him, [is that] it is always clear that he owns her," Nichols says. "Every second. She's his. And she's like a part of him yelling at another part of him."

In the February 9 *New Yorker,* Joe Klein pondered the Clintons' marriage in terms that seemed—for the author of *Primary Colors,* at any rate—oddly diffident. Klein called it "a stupefyingly weird relationship" and said, "There are public aspects of it that mystify." A movie can, of course, be mysterious, but it may not mystify. The pictures must tell the story, and that one tiny moment between Thompson and Travolta, along with many others, says more than the book's author ever could. "It's Mike's movie. I bequeath him the characters," Klein told me recently.

NICHOLS HAS BEEN WAITING FOR THEM A LONG TIME. From his improvisational comedy to his theater directing and producing (*Barefoot in the Park, Annie*) to his 30-year string of movies both successful (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, The Graduate, Carnal Knowledge, Silkwood, Working Girl, Postcards From the Edge,* and *The Birdcage*) and not (*Catch-22, Wolf, Regarding Henry*), there is no more American an artist than Mike Nichols; at the same time, something in him is perpetually Michael Igor Peschkowsky, the 7-year-old refugee from Weimar Berlin who arrived in New York Harbor in 1939.

"I remember with my kid brother, who was 4, the excitement of Rice Krispies and Coca-Cola, food that made noise. And did things," he says, laughing. "I remember all those excitements. And I remember amazement at freedom. Coming off the *Bremen,* I saw a sign on the dock—DELICATESSEN. It had some Hebrew letters, and I said, 'Is that allowed?' So I had gotten it a little bit. I understood."

Yet it was an understanding that, in his rush to become a thoroughly American success, Nichols suppressed until recently. "The Doctorows had dinner, and Lukas Foss's wife, Cornelia, and I were next to each other, and it turned out we'd come over from Europe as children within a few weeks of each other," he says. It had also been, it turned out, a few weeks before the arrival—and the turning-away by U.S. authorities—of the refugee ship *St. Louis,* "and all that that implied: They all went back and went into the camps. And she told me that she had gone to her shrink not so long ago and said that she felt so terribly guilty. And he said, 'Ah, yes—we've been looking for you for a long time.' And she said, 'What do you mean?' And he said, 'Well, we've all been looking for the person who caused the deaths of the 6 million.' And I burst into tears at dinner.

"And to my own astonishment, in the days and weeks and months following this experience, I began to realize to what extent I have never looked at my feelings about this. And then in the last couple of years I've begun to, to some extent, explore my background. I always knew my grandfather was a writer of some importance in Germany and my grandmother, his wife, was a poet, and she had written the libretto for *Salome* with Strauss. And my grandfather had been part of the two-week provisional Weimar government, and been killed immediately after that by the gun butts of the police in the courtyard of the police station. My mother found this out hearing it on the streetcar when she was, I think, 11 or 12.

"I became slightly obsessed with those who didn't make it, and the few who did," Nichols says. "And weirdly, for the first time in my life, I began to think about it, which in turn led me to thinking about what is now my country. And realized how much I love it. And because I was, in a sort of half-assed, unthinking way, with Elaine, a social critic . . ."

His voice trails off for a moment as he tries to weigh a dis-

Photographs: top, MPTV; bottom, Bob Willoughby/MPTV.

tant past—the Eisenhower-Kennedy years of Nichols and May's heyday, that black-and-white time of American confidence and hypocrisy and anxiety that was the perfect petri dish for the team's edgy improvised dialogues—against the vastly different present on which he and Elaine May have chosen to comment again.

"What interested us was behavior," he says. "It was the only thing that ever interested us. And it's still the only thing that interests us. Our own, primarily, but everybody always thought we meant them. It was really ourselves we were making fun of. Remembering, you know, in the backseat of the car and so forth. And at the same time, we were making fun of the prom queen and the basketball player that we could never be. It was too easy—too much fun to go after everybody.

"But what I didn't realize when we were doing all that stuff—well, that's not quite right. I realized it in Elaine but not in me. I watched Elaine, and I thought, *She's doing this remarkable thing. She's looking at these people from the outside and the inside at the same time.* It was always real. There was always great forgiveness and sympathy with these people while she was making fun of them. That was her great gift. But now I think that although she was better at the acting of it than I was, when I began to direct I was more interested in understanding and sympathizing with characters than exposing them."

It's still true. Presented with every opportunity in the world, *Primary Colors* never stoops for a minute to cheap cynicism or facile satire, yet still manages to be deeply funny. It relentlessly maintains its dignity, and the dignity of all involved, without ever losing sight of their raunchy humanity. (And culpability.) It looks at its characters as God, or a Russian playwright, might.

"For me," Nichols says, "the joys of this movie are not so different from working on, or seeing or reading, Chekhov. The intricacy of a group—A wants B, who wants C, who wants D, who wants E, who wants F, who is having an affair with A. And Chekhov's gag, the thing from which he invented the modern theater, was that he would let us know that, and then set them all loose and let us watch it. And that aspect of this picture makes me very happy because it's what Elaine and I love. It's the greatest joy when you can hear audible pleasure from the audience because suddenly the phone rings and Henry is in bed with Daisy, and on the other end is Libby, who's with Jennifer, and what she's saying is, 'Cashmere has tapes.' And he has to get out of bed with Daisy and go knock on [the Stantons'] door and tell them that Cashmere has tapes, and Susan slaps the governor. That's what I love. That's like life. That's the story I wanted to tell—that everybody's in bed with somebody.

"If we're asking for forgiveness, it's nice to remember that everybody's in bed with someone."

ON THIS, NICHOLS HAS LONGITUDINAL PERSPECTIVE. He and Elaine May performed at President Kennedy's famous/infamous 45th-birthday party: "I was standing right behind Marilyn when she sang 'Happy Birthday,' " he recalls. "She had been sewed into her dress. And as she stepped up on this thing, it split. I could see her *ass*. In this sort of flesh-colored-to-begin-with dress. So I have a very clear memory of that." He laughs. "There was a party after that show, and we made some Bobby jokes, and [Bobby Kennedy] was very pissed. He said, 'I'm going to look into your tax returns.' And then we were on the dance floor, and he and Marilyn danced past us, having met that night. And I actually heard her say—it's so bizarre—I heard her say, 'I like you, Bobby.' And he said, 'I like you, too, Marilyn.' Who would write this dialogue for the night they met? And I heard it! I was Zelig! You don't know that history is being made when it's being made."

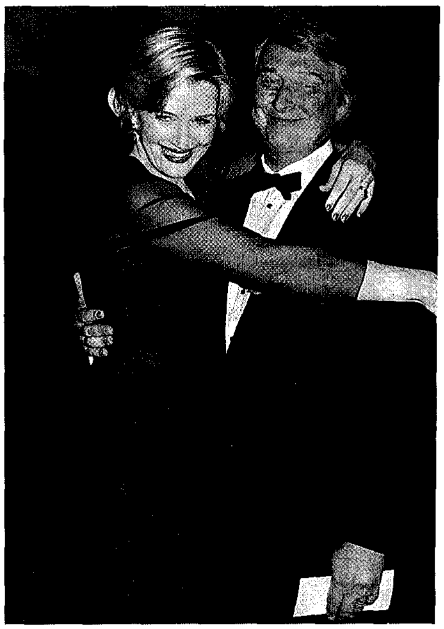
"Were you electrified by Jack Kennedy?" I ask him. "Did you have any skeptical feelings?"

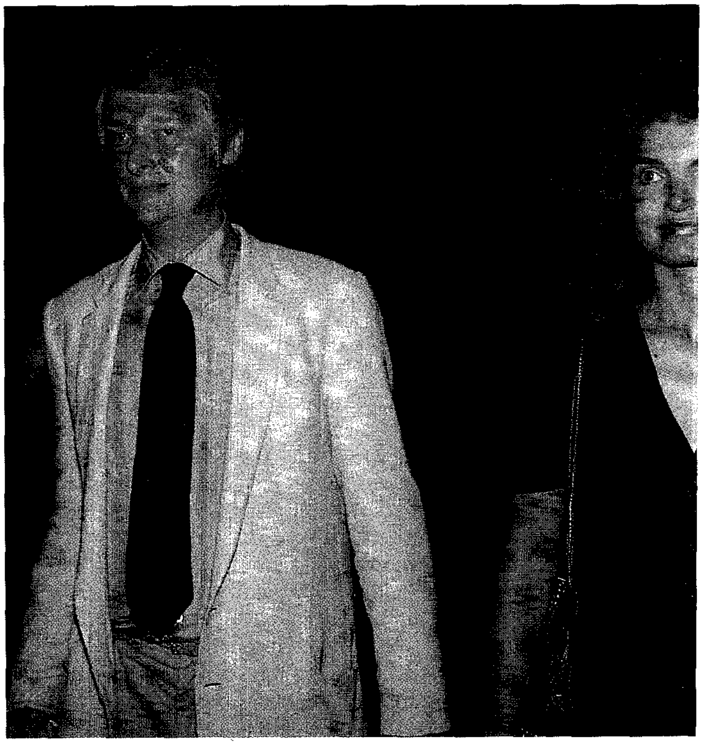
"No," he says. "I was utterly electrified. From the first, I thought that they were this bizarre combination of actually-like-us and also magical. Startling . . . that instead of it being people like Harry Truman, the president and the First Lady were people like us. And of course, when you met them, it was even more startling, because they were really like us. Really sharp. Really funny.

"I didn't know President Kennedy really, [but] I got to be friends with Mrs. Kennedy after he died," Nichols says. "And I always thought—no, I didn't think, I *knew*—that her way of meeting life was developed from studying Malraux, her hero. Malraux devised for De Gaulle a very simple strategy—silence is power. And I think that she adapted that idea for herself, and made it work as well as anybody in this century. And it was a silence that was continued. It was never really broken.

"I think that within that silence were many things that we'll never know that their friends are always guessing about. But I think that's the point. And in a strange way, it's the point about the Stantons. I don't know

NICHOLS AND DAMES: Clockwise from below, with wife Diane Sawyer last year; a 1960 publicity shot with partner (and *Primary Colors* screenwriter) Elaine May; out with Jackie Onassis in 1980.





Photographs: top, Fred Prouser/Sipa; bottom, James Colburn/IPOL.

anything about the Clintons. What I know, I know about the Stantons, who are imaginary people. But it is that there are some things no one will ever know. That's the point. That's what a marriage is. No one will ever know what they really say to each other about these things, and what they feel about these things. And that's the power of marriage. And it's the power of leaders.

"You know, that glass bell that E. M. Forster writes about that descends onto people when they marry," says Nichols, who has been married to Sawyer, his fourth wife, since 1988. "That glass bell is not only what allows civilization to carry on but what allows people to love each other for 20, 30, 40 years. Nobody knows what she knew, what he knew. Who he screwed. Whether he did it. Whether she did it. Who had whom."

> **"Bobby and Marilyn danced past us. I actually heard her say, 'I like you, Bobby.' And he said, 'I like you, too, Marilyn.' Who would write this dialogue for the night they met?"**

A FEW DAYS AFTER THE BREAK OF LEWINSKYGATE, Nichols and I have lunch in a restaurant off Park Avenue, and I ask the inevitable question: Will all this be good for business? Bad for business? Nichols laughs. "It's the only time in my life I cannot imagine what will happen," he says. "I mean, since the last preview, will the laughs be bigger? Will the laughs be less? Of course, there's been endless talk about it. It's part of this weird thing that's happened. Just as rumors become headlines, nobody has to substantiate anything anymore. Also, you don't wait for anything anymore. Everybody has to speculate on business. How can anybody possibly have any idea? I said to the guys at the studio, it could fall into the category of something getting too much publicity. If that really is a big worry. I haven't seen a lot of it so far—that something did badly because it got too much publicity."

But will *Primary Colors* be seen, as the tabloids have endlessly charged, as Nichols's apologia for his pal Bill? By some, anything short of a sneering, seething, climactic John Huston–in–*Chinatown* turn by Travolta will doubtless be seen as a big wet kiss to Clinton. And whatever Mike Nichols's deep-down feelings of inadequacy, he's no Zelig: He's been a serious American eminento for 40 years, one with, no doubt, a certain grain of fellow feeling for the likes of JFK and WJC; and it's hard to show the corridors of power clearly from the inside.

But he's also far too subtle a mind to fail that challenge. (And also far too sharp a mind not to realize that Clinton's remark about Hammett and Faulkner was pure surface—and pure seduction!—based more on the physical resemblance between the authors than on any stylistic similarity.)

If the mark of a first-rate intellect is indeed the ability to hold two opposed ideas at once, *Primary Colors* is the triumph of Mike Nichols's intellect. "There's this line in *The Philadelphia Story*—'The time to make up your mind about people is never,' " he says. "It's a line that I've always loved. I don't want to see a thesis on a character. I don't want to see an opinion. I want to see the mystery of a person. Some days you might think this; some days you might think that. But there are no conclusions.

"And yet, I don't want to preclude observation. The observation that comes from a certain mistrust, even from a certain anger or malice in observing people. It took me a long time to accept my own malice. I had to realize how much pleasure, say, Gore Vidal's or Martin Amis's malice gave me. You say, 'Oh, look, it's liberating. It's pleasing. There's nothing wrong with it. As long as it's combined with some respect and love for people at the same time.' "

For anyone who thinks Nichols has presented a puff piece on Clinton, the critical moment in *Primary Colors* is when Kathy Bates, as a morality litmus test for her old heroes the Stantons, presents them, in the kitchen of the governor's mansion, with a dossier of dirt about Jack Stanton's opponent Freddy Picker (Hagman). Will they hesitate to use it? There is not a flicker of hesitation, and Bates is crushed. The scene is powerfully accusatory—and fateful—in the novel, and its punch is not pulled in the movie.

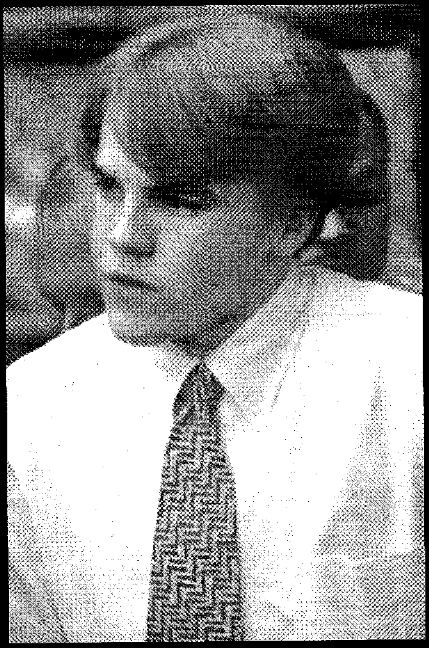
"To me," Nichols says, "the killer moment is when Emma says in the kitchen, 'We didn't know how the world worked. Now we know.' Because I think it's true for all of us. I think most people feel that way: 'I'm sorry to have learned what it's really like.' " ■

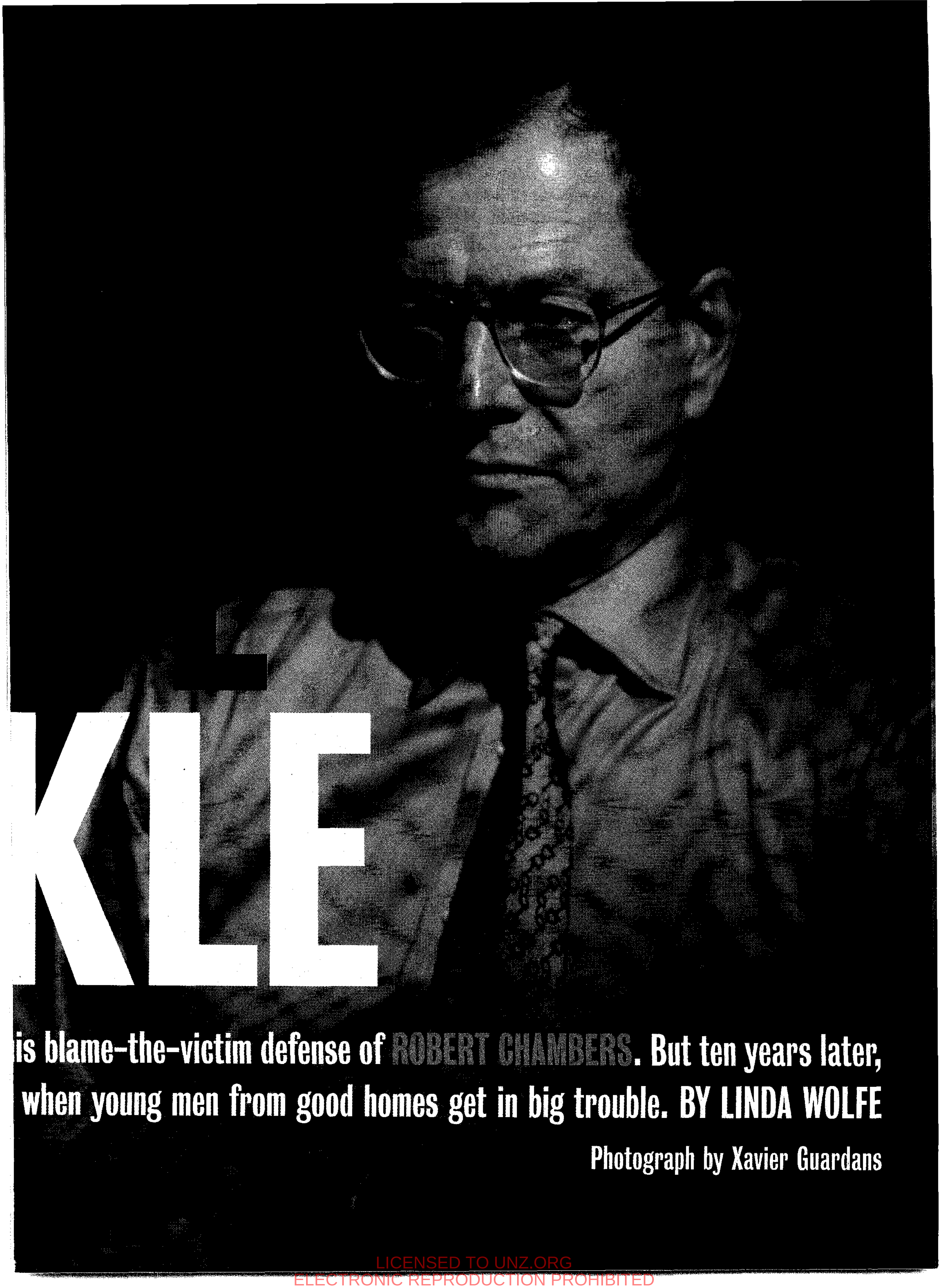
Photograph from Photofest.

THE TAC

JACK LITMAN was vilified
he's still the lawyer of ch

LITMAN'S BOYS: Clockwise from top, preppy killer Robert Chambers; Brian Peterson, accused of murdering his newborn; and accused cyberpredator Oliver Jovanovic





KLE

is blame-the-victim defense of ROBERT CHAMBERS. But ten years later,
when young men from good homes get in big trouble. BY LINDA WOLFE

Photograph by Xavier Guardans

“THAT’S IT,” SAYS ATTORNEY JACK LITMAN, CLOSING HIS MENU. “We’re never going to be able to talk here. You can forget about your interview.” Litman has noticed, somewhat unavoidably, that Linda Fairstein, chief prosecutor in the sex-crimes unit of the Manhattan district attorney’s office, has just been seated inches away from his table at Jean Georges. A former weight lifter, Litman ordinarily holds his chest stiffly forward; now his shoulder blades are so taut, they look starched. • Although Fairstein isn’t personally trying Litman’s current high-profile client—Columbia graduate student Oliver Jovanovic, the tabloid-dubbed cyberspace sex fiend accused of binding and torturing a woman he courted over the Internet—Litman and the telegenic prosecutor have battled before in court, most famously when he represented preppy murderer Robert Chambers. And as the supervisor of the assistant D.A. handling the case, which is scheduled to go to trial in early March, Fairstein has no doubt been gearing up for battle.

But with the same calm she used to her advantage during the Chambers trial, she handles Litman gracefully. Perhaps, she suggests, half joking, she should join us until her guests arrive. “That way you won’t feel I’m listening in on your conversation,” she says. “And when my friends get here, I’ll be busy talking to them—you’ll be free to talk.” Litman actually nods coolly, and she sits beside him. They don’t make small talk. They make tiny talk. The weather. The look of the restaurant. “Pretty, isn’t it?” she says. “Too Cartesian,” he sniffs.

“WHEN JACK WAS SAVAGED IN THE PRESS, I STARTED TH
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At last, Fairstein’s dining companions arrive and she departs to join them. Litman’s pique is slow to fade. “That one,” he says in the same tone Clinton reserved for “that woman.” “Any other D.A. but her would have thrown out the Jovanovic case. Because there’s damning stuff about the woman who’s accusing Oliver. Things she wrote to him on the Internet.” Litman won’t elaborate on the hint he’s thrown out, sticking to the subject of his mini-diatribe. “But that one,” he says, jutting his cleft chin in Fairstein’s direction, “she’s crazy—not only didn’t she throw it out; she asked for $500,000 bail!”

If Fairstein was trying to demonstrate over fish forks last spring that she could dispassionately put her issues with Jack Litman behind her—one of her biggest being that Litman tried to defend Chambers by slurring the victim in the case—by the eve of the Jovanovic trial she was anything but neutral.

“My unit has two current cases with him,” Fairstein says, clearly angry. “There’s the case of the young woman who’s accused Jovanovic, and one involving a woman who says her dentist sexually abused her while she was under sedation. On more than one occasion, he’s come through the courthouse and referred to the Jovanovic accuser as ‘the fucking lunatic.’ And he’s referred to the woman in the dentist case as ‘the fucking bitch.’ He also called her a ‘whore’ who was ‘just interested in money.’ Need I say more?”

It certainly wouldn’t be the first time a New York lawyer used unflattering or crude language to describe the opposition, but Litman denies making those comments, calling the accusation “absurd.” “I never used the foul language Ms. Fairstein attributes to me,” he says in a formal reply the next day. “However, I never hesitate to argue vigorously the innocence of my clients and to suggest reasons why I believe a complainant, male or female, is not credible. I’ve represented many women in my career, and they expect no less of me when I defend them.”

Litman is well accustomed to defending himself along with his sometimes controversial clients. Highly respected by his legal colleagues, Litman, as a result of his aggressive representation of Chambers, has become a symbol of the kind of lawyer people who aren’t lawyers love to hate. He tried to enter into evidence pages from Jennifer Levin’s diary, he subjected her family to hard-to-take suggestions about their late daughter’s character, and he committed a high crime against gender sensitivity—he blamed it on the victim, arguing that his client accidentally killed Levin while defending himself from her harmful sexual advances. (That defense, of course, was based on the story Chambers told police before Litman’s representation even began.) Protesters picketed outside his office; he was trashed on talk shows. Former friends shunned him at social events. Around that time, his marriage to attorney Helena Litman broke up.

“The scary thing,” says defense attorney Gerald Lefcourt, a friend of Litman’s, “is that the treatment Jack got during the Chambers trial could be rekindled at any point.”

IF LITMAN HAS BEEN OPERATING BELOW THE media radar screen since the Chambers case, he didn’t hesitate to use virtually the same defense again in 1995, when he represented a talent agent accused of murdering an actress found naked in a garbage bag in a parking lot. He argued that the talent agent was merely trying to sever his professional relationship with the actress, who then responded by undressing and attempting to seduce him. Litman’s client, he argued, tried to fend her off, using the gun merely to show his resolve, until “tragically, it went off” by accident. The client was acquitted of murder and convicted of involuntary manslaughter.

In fact, Litman first introduced a paler version of this defense in 1978, on behalf of Yale student Richard Herrin. Herrin not only admitted to killing Bonnie Garland—the 22-year-old told police her head “split like a watermelon”—but testified that when he entered her room with a hammer, he intended to kill her. Litman’s defense sympathetically portrayed Herrin as a love-struck young man driven temporarily insane by a manipulative and unfaithful girlfriend. Herrin was acquitted of murder but convicted of manslaughter in the first degree.

Now Litman is defending not only Jovanovic but Brian Peterson, who, along with his girlfriend, Amy Grossberg, is accused of murdering their newborn in a hotel room. While the case has stirred up serious animosity toward the defendants where it’s being tried, in Delaware, one lawyer notes, “What’s very interesting about the boy in this case is that there is a boy in this case. Other guys in situations like this run away from the girl.”

Litman has successfully argued for

Photographs: previous pages, top, David Bookstaver/AP/Wide World; Don Halas/New York *Post*/Corbis; Reuters/Archive Photos.

clients accused of white-collar crime, insider trading, rape, spousal abuse, and murder. But what New York attorneys say most reflexively about Jack Litman is that he's the guy they'd tell you to call if your *kid* was in trouble.

BORN TWO YEARS AFTER HIS JEWISH-REFUGEE family arrived in New York City, Litman played a crucial role in a family narrative that paved the way for his future profession. Just weeks after he was born, Immigration, abiding by the U.S.'s then-restrictive policy toward European refugees, caught up with his family. The Litmans then left for Canada, from where they would most likely have been sent back to Europe. But his parents took only four of their five children, leaving Jack behind with a neighbor. Shortly thereafter, on the basis of seeking reunion with an American citizen, their 1½-month-old American infant, Litman's parents applied for reentry and were at last granted legal access to the United States. "Litman's career goes back to his earliest childhood," theorizes his former Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz. "It gave him a distrust of power."

This shard of wartime history also gave Jack permanent status as the family hero. "My mother always said," he explains, " 'Jackilou, you were my life savior. You made life in America possible.' "

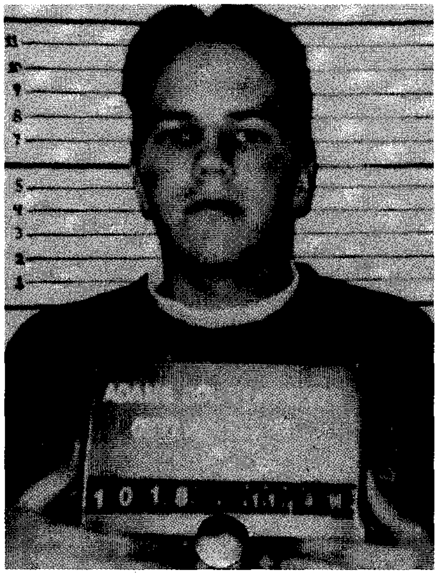
With a feat like that as his start, it's easy to see how Litman's legendary ego developed. "All criminal-defense attorneys have big egos. You've got to have one in this business," says Roger Stavis, Litman's co-counsel during the Chambers trial, now a prominent attorney in his own right. "But Jack's is the biggest. He thinks no one's his equal."

ING A DEFENSE
HAN WINNING ONE."

His intellectual talents are, in fact, daunting: Someone who reads number theory for fun and hones his celebrated forensic expertise by keeping up with scientific journals, Litman was choosing between one prestigious graduate school scholarship for French literature and another for math when he changed course altogether and applied, successfully, to Harvard Law School.

From the start, recalls Dershowitz, "he was Mr. Criminal Law. He had a determination about entering the field that you rarely see in students. And he had an instinct for the jugular."

After studying the French criminal-justice system on a Fulbright fellowship for a year, Litman returned to the Upper West Side, where he's lived his entire life with the exception of his years in college and abroad. He entered the Manhattan D.A.'s office, working his way through the ranks to become deputy chief of the homicide unit. Says Gerald Lefcourt, who won the only case Litman lost while in the D.A.'s office, "It was terrifying to go up against Litman. He was zealous. And he had this aura of success about him that was like a second skin."



TROUBLED YOUTH: Clockwise from above, Brian Peterson; Litman with Jovanovic outside Manhattan Criminal Court; Litman with Robert Chambers, who would ultimately plead guilty to manslaughter.

Although Litman was quickly recognized as a rising star at the D.A.'s office, he was eventually accused of crossing an ethical line after he brilliantly prosecuted William Phillips, a cop who testified about police corruption before the Knapp commission but was later indicted for murdering a pimp and a prostitute. Three weeks after the conviction, it came out that one of the jurors had once applied for a job as an investigator in the D.A.'s office. A fellow assistant D.A. later testified at a hearing that she'd informed Litman of that possible conflict of interest in the last week of the trial, and that he'd replied, "I don't want to hear about that" or "I didn't hear that," as cited in a 1987 *American Lawyer* article. Litman's hard-won conviction of Phillips was set aside until the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated it in 1981. But the court voiced its disapproval. "We do not condone the conduct of the prosecutors in this case" noted Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in her concurring opinion.

Supreme Court–justice reprimand notwithstanding, to this day, Litman downplays the incident, explaining that the juror had mentioned before the judge during voir dire that he was looking around for jobs in law enforcement, including various D.A.'s offices. As for what he told the fellow assistant D.A., "I don't specifically remember," he says. "It was 25 years ago."

By the time that hearing occurred, Litman had already been in private practice for several years, defending a host of infamous and celebrated clients, among them Rabbi Bernard Bergman, the leading figure in the seventies state and federal inquiries into nursing-home abuses, and Kevin Durkin, a headline-grabbing Bronx policeman who shot two unarmed men while drinking in a bar. (Durkin was ultimately acquitted of all charges.) One of the longest of Litman's long-shots was his client David Tse, the Chinatown businessman who unloaded eighteen bullets into his victim but was nonetheless acquitted in 1991 on grounds of self-defense.

Photographs: top, Barbara Johnston/Reuters/Archive Photos; middle, Bolivar Arellano/New York *Post*/Corbis; bottom, Sara Krulwich/New York Times Co./Archive Photos.

“THE POINT WAS NOT TO ATTAIN JUSTICE FOR LEVIN, BUT A DEFENDANT HAS A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO

Litman's admirers attribute much of his success to a combination of tenaciousness and the kind of high-flying risk-taking that can pay off in a courtroom. “He's incredibly daring,” says Scott Tulman, a former associate in Litman's firm, Litman, Asche & Gioiella, recalling that a crucial matter during the Tse murder trial, on which he and Litman worked together, was the presence in crime-scene photos of dollar bills fanned around the dead body. Had their client, the killer, arranged the dollar bills as a kind of warning to others or statement of contempt, a signal of intent? Or had the bills somehow just landed that way? “Litman spent hours on end throwing dollars bills onto our office floor to see if they could land in a fan shape. But a lot of the time they just scattered. He kept at it, and kept at it, and at the trial, in front of the jury, he stood up and started to throw down the bills. My heart was in my mouth. And then he tossed down the money. It landed just the way it did in the crime-scene photos.”

Litman is often described as charming but impersonal, even standoffish; a devoted father of two young men, one 18, one 24, he seems to respond most warmly to colleagues when given the chance to mentor or advise. “I'm in a very small firm, and sometimes I need help,” says Luther Williams, a New York criminal-defense attorney. “Jack's the kind of guy you can call up during a fifteen-minute recess and get such concise help that you can run back and win.” Widely praised by his peers for his intellect and his focus, Litman nonetheless irritates some courtroom colleagues with his relentless, sometimes grating, intensity. “Judges groan when he comes into the court,” says one judge. “It's not because he makes their lives difficult—some of the best lawyers in town do that—but because he does it in a way that's not helpful to him. He acts obnoxious to no effect.”

JOVANOVIC'S ACCUSER, A 22-year-old Barnard student from upstate New York, says that in November 1996, after meeting Jovanovic online, she met him in person over dinner, then went to his Washington Heights apartment, where, when she attempted to leave, he gagged her, stripped her, and tied her legs to a chair. Over the next twenty hours, she claims, he burned her with candle wax, bit her breasts, and assaulted her with a police baton. (Jovanovic is pleading not guilty.)

Already, signs of a forthcoming fast-and-loose fight between Litman's team and the prosecution are evident. “They've been going to every place this young woman lived and speaking to everyone she knew,” complains one law-enforcement official. “And they've been trying to elicit negative things about her by saying things that aren't even true as if they were facts, like that she once falsely reported a crime.” Litman responds with a careful reply. “You getting this down?” he asks before enunciating his comment slowly. “The unidentified source is not telling the truth, as is evident from the fact that he or she is afraid to use his or her name.”

Litman's office has indeed been checking into the accuser's past, just as the prosecutors have been investigating Jovanovic's. In addition to interviewing her friends and reviewing her e-mail correspondence with Jovanovic, Litman and his partner, Fred Sosinsky, spent months attempting to subpoena her e-mails to other correspondents, a still-murky area of the law that rings privacy-rights bells with the cyber set. The former judge (he's been replaced because of potential conflict of interest) flip-flopped several times on that issue before denying the request again in September. It's likely that Litman's office will continue throughout the trial to try to gain access to those e-mail missives, on the grounds that they will reveal inconsistencies in the accuser's story.

The prosecution team is, somewhat on cue, outraged by the Litman team's efforts to uncover compromising information about the young Barnard woman. In the reported opinion of Assistant D.A. Gail Heatherly, who's trying the case, those requests set the stage for a “nasty character assassination” of the accuser. “Basically, their strategy is the same old she-asked-for-it defense,” adds the victim's lawyer, Ellen Rosenthal, a partner at New York's Koegel & Rosenthal who has so far successfully fended off Litman's e-mail bids. She laughs. “You know, ‘She asked to be tortured and burned and detained against her will.’ ”

In fact, Litman's team intends to argue that the accuser was never tortured or burned at all, that “none of the violent and criminal acts that she alleges in the indictment ever took place,” clarifies Sosinsky. “We're not arguing that she consented or agreed to those acts—we're arguing that they are fictitious and fabrications.”

To make that point, say several criminal-defense lawyers, Litman will have no choice but to attack the credibility—and thus the reputation—of the accuser. But the tactic, if anything less than utterly convincing, risks striking the jury as a ploy that adds insult to an egregious injury.

Jeffrey Newman, who was Litman's opponent in the Levin-diary fight (he represented her parents), doesn't think demanding the Barnard student's e-mail is as questionable as demanding Levin's diary. (It may have been Newman who recommended Litman to Jovanovic's parents. Neither Litman or Newman will say, but Newman does admit that he knows the Jovanovics—Oliver's father, a chess coach at the Dalton School, and his mother, Sabina, a first violinist with the New York City Ballet—very well.) “There are only superficial similarities between the Chambers and the Jovanovic cases,” Newman says. “Jennifer Levin was dead. Her credibility was not an issue in the case. In this case, the victim is alive. So it's legitimate to question her credibility.”

By now, however, Litman has come to expect some condemnation from non-lawyers. “It's part of the job description,” he says. “I always tell young criminal-defense attorneys that for the most part, you're going to be representing very unpopular people. It's a noble task. The Constitution requires it of us. But you've got to expect that you're going to be the butt of jokes and a lot worse on the part of the friends and supporters of victims. The bulk of my clients are people who once would have said, ‘Litman is a son of a bitch.’ But when they're caught up in insider trading, securities fraud, spousal abuse, they come to me. They know I'm going to do the best for them that can be done.” Pressed further, Litman reluctantly addresses how he personally feels about the past personal attacks: “All right. You want to know if you're going to lose sleep? The answer is yes. Are you going to lose hair? Yes. Are you going to lose friends? Yes. But you have to stand up and do what's right.”

The underdog heroism of his work must appeal to the savior in Litman, the role he was assigned by his family so early on. “I can find something good in everyone,” he says, “even people derided by everyone else.”

Judith Lindahl, a Boston criminal-defense attorney and a friend of Litman's from law school, sees Litman's perspective through a less philosophical lens. “I think he suffered a lot because of what people said to him during the Chambers trial," she says. At times in his career, Litman has been deeply concerned for his sons, whose classmates taunted them about their famous father.

Vivian Berger, a professor of law at Columbia University who describes herself as both a civil libertarian and a feminist, says the public's perception of the case was somewhat off kilter. "The point was not to attain justice for Jennifer Levin but justice, period," she says succinctly. "To put it plainly, the defendant has a constitutional right to mount his defense."

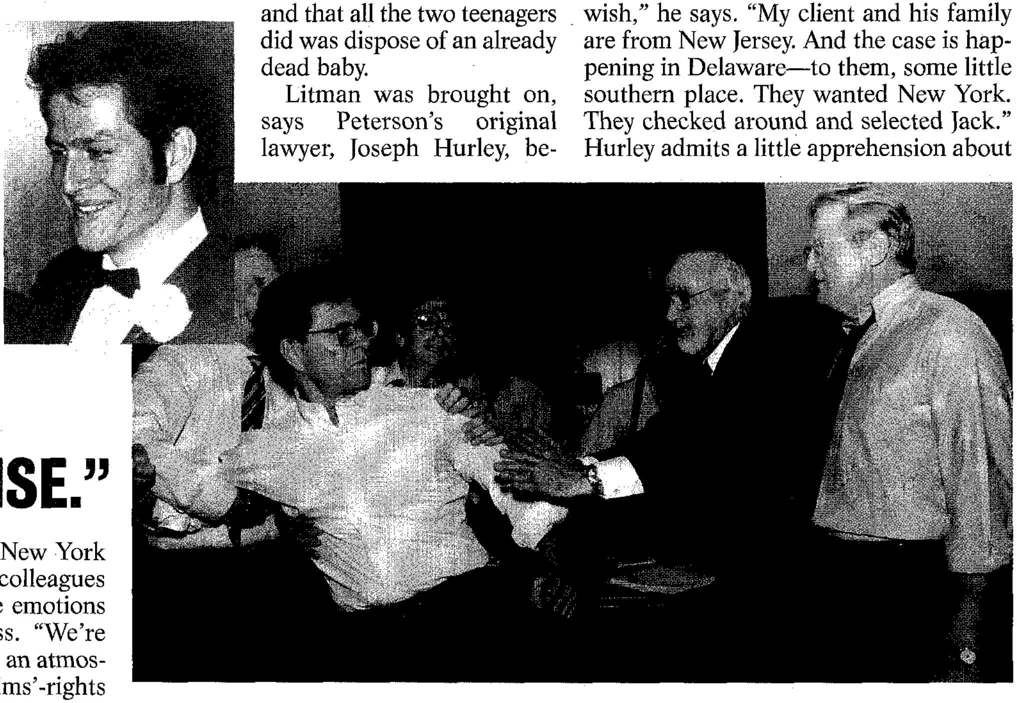
Litman's advocacy of Chambers came just at a time when the victims'-rights movement was getting under way. "Justice for Jennifer!" demonstrators used to shout in front of the court—a far cry from the sixties-era shouts demanding justice for defendants. Today, victims'-rights advocates have become major players not just outside the courtrooms but inside, where the relatives of crime victims are now allowed to introduce victims'-impact statements. The public seems to support this change in court procedure, and few voices have been raised in objection, although Brent Staples recently condemned the legal trend in the New York *Times.* But Litman and his colleagues think the outsize appeal to the emotions endangers the judicial process. "We're creating a class of false victims, an atmosphere in which powerful victims'-rights advocates can influence the outcome of a trial in ways the Founding Fathers never intended," says Litman.

STICE, PERIOD.
UNT HIS DEFENSE."

Litman and his colleagues say the low regard in which criminal-defense attorneys are now held is influencing the legal system in powerful, potentially damaging ways. "When Jack was savaged during the Chambers trial," says Dershowitz, "I started thinking a defense attorney is almost better off losing an unpopular case than winning one. Then we had the O.J. trial—more attacks on defense attorneys. One result of all this is that at Harvard, there's a dearth of students who want to be criminal-defense attorneys."

Dershowitz blames the media but reserves some judgment for the public itself. "Nowadays there's more media. And the media rubs the public's nose in the Bill of Rights, shows them the way defense attorneys stand up for it. And you know what? The public doesn't like the Bill of Rights!"

IN THE GROSSBERG-PETERSON CASE, Litman's defense will likely be driven by forensics, not character. Peterson and Grossberg are accused of killing their newborn, which they delivered themselves, then placing the baby in a plastic garbage bag and depositing it in a trash bin. The medical examiner who autopsied the body has said the baby died from blunt trauma. And while Peter Letang, the prosecutor in this case, will focus on this explanation of the infant's death, he has indicated that he may also suggest that death could have been caused by suffocation in the garbage bag or exposure to freezing temperatures. Peterson's and Grossberg's lawyers intend to argue that the baby was not "viable" when it came out of Grossberg's womb, and that all the two teenagers did was dispose of an already dead baby.



SHOWMAN: **From top, Litman as a young man; rehearsing for a performance of *Twelve Angry Men***

Litman was brought on, says Peterson's original lawyer, Joseph Hurley, because of the forensic strength he displayed during the Chambers trial and others. In light of the judge's gag order, Litman is even more tight-lipped than usual talking about the case. One lawyer, Bob Gottlieb, has already been dismissed for violating it. His replacement is California attorney Robert Tanenbaum, a onetime colleague of Litman's in the Manhattan D.A.'s office and a rival for the spotlight even then. Their history of competition has inspired debate among mutual acquaintances about whether they'll see eye to eye on how to proceed with the case, speculation that seems well-founded: Tanenbaum recently asked the Delaware court to try the two teenagers separately. In a written motion submitted to the court, he argued that separate trials are the only way to make sure both Grossberg and Peterson have fair trials, since "acceptance by the jury of the core of the defense offered by Amy will require the jury to reject the core of the defense offered by Brian."

In Delaware, anti-defendant sentiments have already been on display. When Peterson turned himself in to the court in November 1996, advocates of the rights of the unborn were passing out leaflets near the courthouse. One senses there will be a certain excitement about the prospect of seeing the famously truculent Litman in action. "He has a different style from what we're used to here," says his co-counsel, Hurley. "He's in the opponent's face."

It wasn't Hurley who chose to work with Litman. "Clients and their families repose their confidence in whomever they wish," he says. "My client and his family are from New Jersey. And the case is happening in Delaware—to them, some little southern place. They wanted New York. They checked around and selected Jack." Hurley admits a little apprehension about how Litman's style will go over: "I just hope the jurors and the judge don't look at the style but the substance."

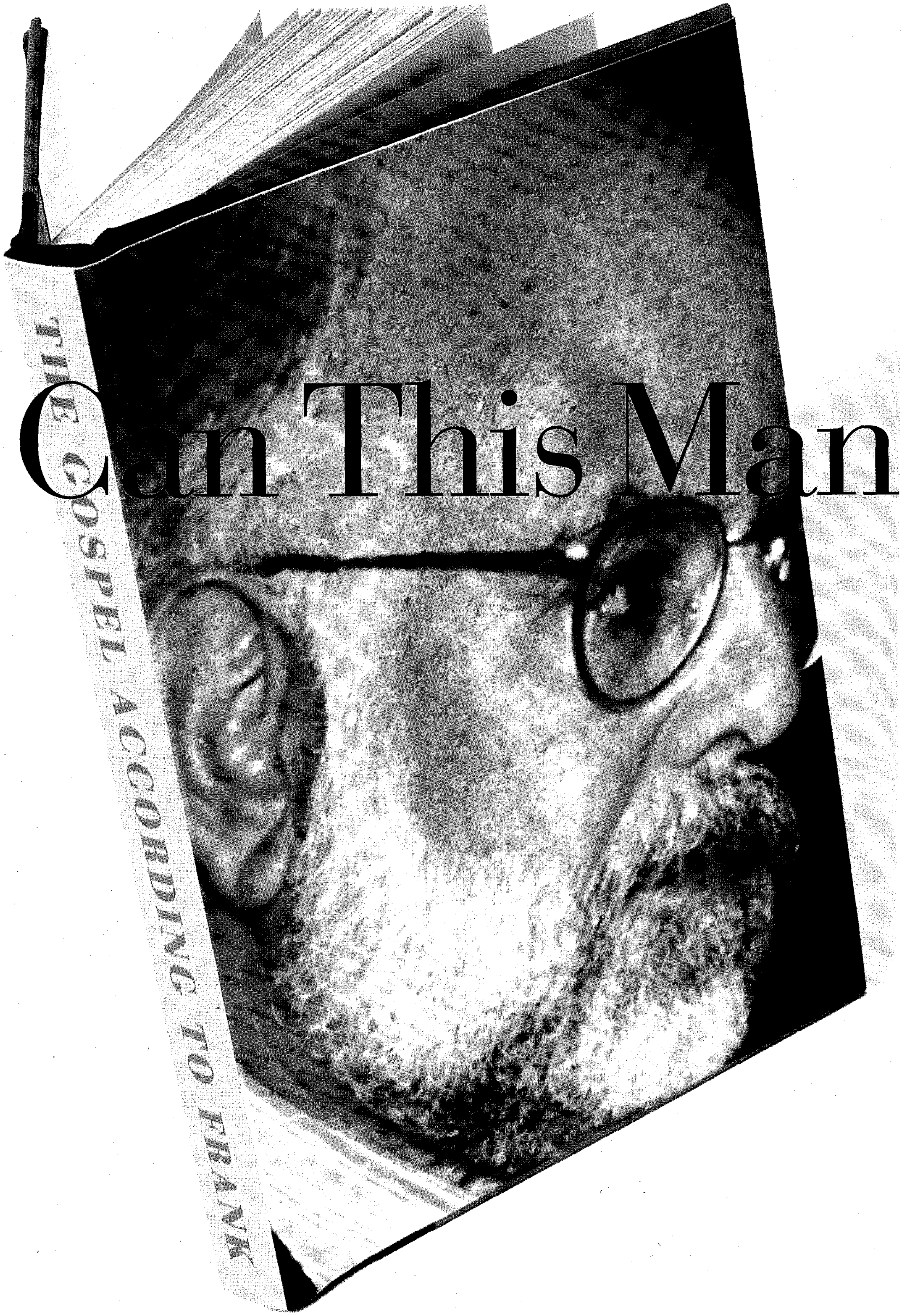
ACCUSED OF MANIPULATING THE PRESS DURING the Chambers trial, Litman was steadfastly closed-mouthed on the subject of the two cases. He insists stonily, "I try my cases in court, not the newspaper."

When asked what, if anything, he wishes he'd done differently during the Chambers trial, Litman is silent for close to half a minute. "It's a very difficult question," he finally says. "All I can tell you is that the way the case resulted [Chambers pleaded to first-degree manslaughter] is what we offered before the case started. We had to fight to get the appropriate result. It could have been avoided."

But given a fight, Litman is not one to back down. ■

Photographs: bottom, Susan Ragan/AP/Wide World.

Can This Man



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO FRANK

BIG PUBLISHERS MAY BE BAILING OUT
OF SERIOUS FICTION AND NONFICTION,
SAYING THEY CAN'T MAKE THE MID-LIST PAY,
BUT A FORMER LBO MAGNATE NAMED FRANK PEARL
IS OUT TO PROVE THEY'RE WRONG. AND HE'S ALREADY
GOT A **BEST-SELLER** TO SHOW FOR IT.

Save Publishing?

BY SAMUEL G. FREEDMAN

ONE MILD WINTER MORNING IN EARLY 1994, AS JACK Shoemaker sat in the home office of his Berkeley bungalow, a room dominated by a poster announcing I SHALL ALWAYS LOVE THE WEST, the telephone rang with a summons from the opposite coast. A corporate headhunter wanted Shoemaker, a renowned book editor, to meet an unnamed someone in Washington, D.C. As if the invitation were not cryptic enough, the headhunter added, "You won't know this person." ■ Baffled, Shoemaker demurred. Two years earlier, he had closed North Point Press, the acclaimed literary imprint he had founded, nurtured to fruition, and then disastrously overexpanded. His current position, as the West Coast editor for Pantheon Books, did not exactly exhaust his talents, but it allowed him to savor such Bay Area pleasures as the year-round garden beneath his window, vibrant this day with seasonal roses and grasses. ■ The headhunter called several times over the next few days. Finally, he identified his employer, a lawyer named Frank Pearl, and said that Pearl was interested in learning about publishing. Intrigued, Shoemaker took the flight to Washington that had been reserved for him and checked in to the room that had been booked at the luxurious Hay-Adams. Then he went to a suite of offices a few blocks from the White House to meet his host. ■ Bearded, balding, and just past 50, Pearl spoke with admiration about Evan Connell's book about Custer, *Son of the Morning Star,* a surprise best-seller that gave North Point fame and cachet. He asked about Shoemaker's background, North Point's history, the publishing industry, even his guest's taste in music, art, and cuisine. Rarely had Shoemaker been in the presence of such a ravenous curiosity. ■ At last, Shoemaker asked a question of his own: "What book would you most like to have published?" ■ "Marcus Aurelius's *Confessions,*" Pearl answered. ■ Shoemaker told himself, *This is the least frivolous person I've ever met.* ■ Before the visit ended, Pearl revealed more of himself and his plans. He was a lawyer by training and an investment banker by profession—albeit one too circumspect to add that he had earned tens of millions of dollars doing leveraged buyouts. Now he was considering launching a publishing company. What would it take for Shoemaker to lead it? ■ It would take four or five more trips to Washington, each one spent in hours of conversation. All the talk reassured Shoemaker that Pearl shared his own commitment to literary publishing and furthermore had

Frank Pearl photograph by Jim Brantley/The Washington *Times*; book photograph by Steven Freeman.

pockets deep enough to absorb the risks that had even major publishers sliding into financial trouble. In June 1994, Shoemaker resigned from Pantheon and moved to Washington as editor-in-chief of Counterpoint Press. Within twenty months, the upstart imprint had captured both the National Book Critics Circle Award and the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction for Gina Berriault's short-story collection *Women in Their Beds.*

These laurels were only the beginning. In the past year, Pearl has spent perhaps $60 million assembling a publishing enterprise called Perseus Books that is entirely devoted to the sort of literary fiction and serious nonfiction that the conglomerates increasingly deem endangered species. To Counterpoint, Pearl has added one imprint oriented to history and politics (PublicAffairs), one devoted to African-American culture (Civitas Books), and two properties that were being closed or drastically shrunk by their previous owners (Basic Books and the Addison Wesley Longman General Publishing Group). He has attracted to these ventures several distinguished former publishers from Simon & Schuster, Times Books, and HarperCollins—all of them disturbed by the excesses of corporate publishing—as well as one of the nation's foremost public intellectuals, Henry Louis Gates Jr. Perseus's roster of authors includes Berriault, Connell, Cornel West, and National Book Award winner Orlando Patterson. Now Pearl has his first bestseller, Iris Chang's *The Rape of Nanking,* which currently sits at No. 11 on the *Times*'s list and fetched $500,000 for paperback rights.

This coming fall, Perseus will release a unified list of 60 new hardcover titles, as many as an established house. Undergirding these books is a paperback backlist that brings in annual revenues of roughly $13 million, a rare asset indeed for a new publisher.

Through all this activity, the 54-year-old Pearl has achieved one more goal—being a supremely connected man who remains as obscure to the public as he was four years ago to Jack Shoemaker. In the past twenty years, even as he has executed landmark LBOs, donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Democratic Party, served as a trustee of the Kennedy Center and on the trustees' council of the National Gallery of Art, and become a significant figure in publishing, he has rarely uttered more than a sentence in the media. The standard reference book for venture capital, *Pratt's Guide,* does not list Pearl among its 3,500 entries. Neither the Washington *Post*'s book critic, Jonathan Yardley, nor a major literary agent in the capital, Rafe Sagelyn, had ever heard of Pearl. Perseus's own press releases sometimes omit his name.

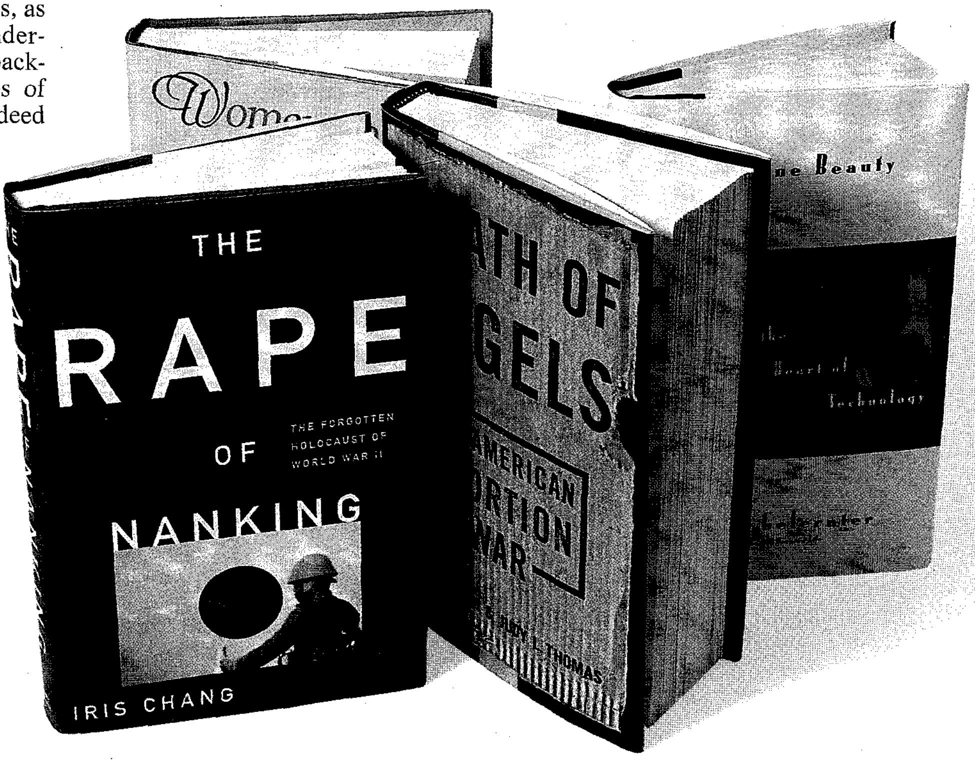
"Frank is one of those people who enjoy anonymity," says Leonard Slatkin, the conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra and one of Pearl's closest friends. "He's one of the least self-promoting people I know." Indeed, Pearl declined repeated requests to be interviewed for this article, maintaining that it would be "premature" and "unbecoming" to speak before Perseus Books compiles more of a record. He conceded that his aversion to publicity might strike others as "phobic." But regardless of his reasons, his fierce privacy belies his public impact. "He can bring not only business acumen but taste and culture, and you rarely find people with both," says James Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank, who recruited Pearl for the Kennedy Center's board. "And he gets things done."

THE PERILS OF PUBLISHING ARE by now well documented. Net sales of adult hardcover books, as measured in dollars, fell by 5.6 percent from 1994 to 1995, 4.4 percent from 1995 to 1996, and 4.8 percent in the first ten months of 1997, according to statistics from the Association of American Publishers. Unpaid returns, again in terms of dollars, stood at 35.9 percent in 1996.

Few publishing houses escaped the implications. HarperCollins canceled the contracts of 106 authors last June and two months later announced a write-off of $270 million. Simon & Schuster, Random House, and Penguin Putnam all wrote off huge losses in 1996. Ultimately, HarperCollins decided to shutter Basic Books, an imprint esteemed for publishing scholars from Sigmund Freud to Stephen Carter, and Addison Wesley downsized the trade-publishing operation that had broken out such authors as Melissa Fay Greene (*Praying For Sheetrock*), H. G. Bissinger (*Friday Night Lights*), and Robert Bly (*Iron John*).

Against such odds, Pearl still expects to make a profit, but without the reliance on blockbusters that has undermined so many larger publishers. Instead, Perseus will depend on disciplined spending and lean staffing. Drawing on models as varied as small-press collectives and the Random House behemoth, it will provide a single back office to serve its various imprints while outsourcing such tasks as design and legal representation. And it doesn't hurt that the chill among larger publishers is driving down the advances for important authors into Perseus's modest range, which runs roughly from $7,500 to $250,000.

Even potential competitors of Frank Pearl and Perseus Books applaud his effort. "It's a brilliant idea, and it's healthy for the business," says William Patrick, the senior executive editor for Henry Holt and formerly the editorial director of the



Mid-list triumphant: Iris Chang's bestselling *The Rape of Nanking,* Gina Berriault's *Women in Their Beds,* David Gelernter's *Machine Beauty,* James Risen and Judy L. Thomas's *Wrath of Angels: The American Abortion War,* and, on page 41, H. W. Brands's *TR: The Last Romantic.*

“FRANK IS ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO ENJOY **ANONYMITY**. HE’S ONE OF THE LEAST SELF-PROMOTING PEOPLE I KNOW.”

general-books division at Addison Wesley. “Pearl and Perseus are the smart people who see that if the conglomerates are pruning off these worthy branches, then, hell, we can grab them, collect them, replant them, and make them grow under a different roof.”

DURING A CELEBRATION OF THE National Gallery of Art’s fiftieth anniversary in 1991, its senior curator of paintings, Charles Moffett, found himself admiring the same Italian canvas as a man he faintly knew from other gallery events, Frank Pearl. As they talked for the first time, Pearl exhibited such knowledge that Moffett thought him “as well-versed as an art historian.” Before separating from the curator, Pearl mentioned his interest in someday publishing art books.

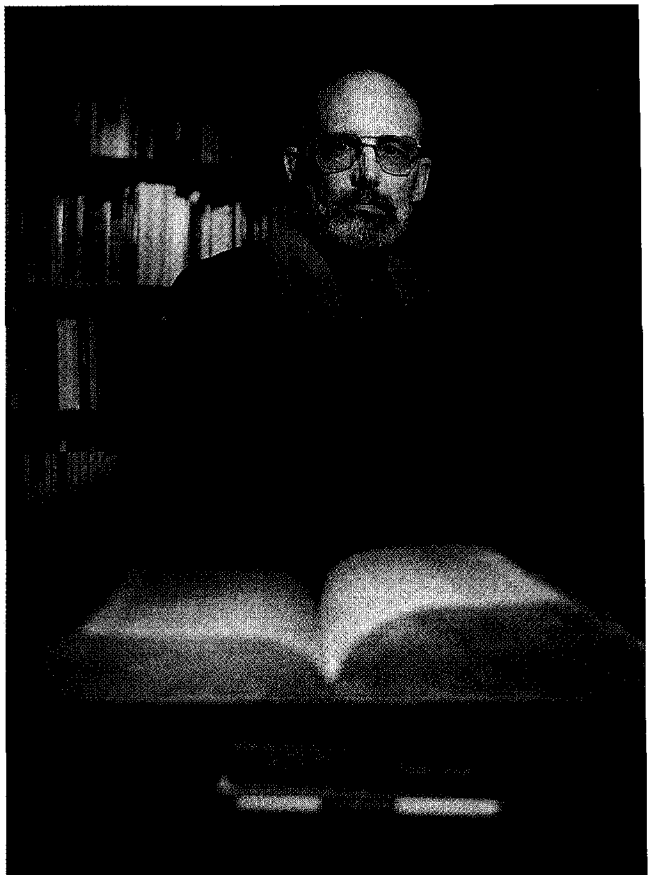
Moffett remembered that comment a year later, when he became director of the Phillips Collection, a small and prestigious art museum in the capital. The Phillips had assembled all 60 paintings in the black artist Jacob Lawrence’s “Migration Series” for the first time in decades and was preparing to send its exhibit across the country. “Mr. Pearl,” Moffett told him on the phone, “I think we’ve got a project that might interest you.”

If Moffett had merely been seeking a financier, he could not have chosen better. After taking his law degree from American University in 1969, Pearl had made millions first as a commercial lawyer with Lane and Edson, representing Washington’s wealthy Cafritz family, and then as a partner in the investment firm Wesray, with former Treasury secretary William Simon. Wesray essentially launched the LBO craze with its 1982 purchase of Gibson Greetings—having put just $1 million of its own cash into the $80 million acquisition, Wesray took Gibson public sixteen months later for $290 million—and netted a $750 million profit in the 1986 LBO of Avis.

Pearl retired in 1988 and spent a year sailing around the world with his wife in their 92-foot sloop. Upon returning to Washington, he devoted much of the next four years to volunteer work, endowing everything from cancer research to meals for the homeless to college scholarships for poor children through a foundation he named for his grandmother Jennie Zoline.

But Moffett was right in thinking that Pearl was more than a checkbook with a conscience. Pearl’s passion for the arts can be traced back to his childhood in Chicago, when his middle-class parents treated him to painting classes at the Art Institute and tickets for the Lyric Opera and Chicago Symphony Orchestra. His adult tastes ranged from Italian and Northern Renaissance oils to Vaughan Williams compositions to the blues of Mose Allison. He endowed a piano scholarship at Washington’s Duke Ellington School for the Arts in the name of another favorite, jazz musician Michel Camilo. And in the years to come, as a Kennedy Center trustee, he would immerse himself in projects as disparate as restoring the concert hall and reorganizing the symphony.

Still, not even Moffett may have realized that Pearl was treating the prospective book on Jacob Lawrence as his firsthand education in publishing. By himself or with the staff of his new investment company, Rappahannock, Pearl debriefed experts in distribution, formulated financial projections, and recruited a respected Knopf editor, Susan Ralston, to serve as managing editor.



Pearl’s first major hire: Jack Shoemaker, editor-in-chief of Counterpoint Press.

“He took an active interest in all aspects,” Moffett recalls. “Design, choice of typeface, color separations, bids from binders. He was thoroughly versed in all the details.”

“When we were sitting around the table with lunch sent in, he’d ask me questions about the book business,” says Ralston. “About the difference between keeping a book alive in hardcover and keeping it alive in trade paper. About the effect of chains. And this was more than four years ago. He felt that if sound business principles were applied to trade publishing, it could work. And I certainly didn’t disagree.”

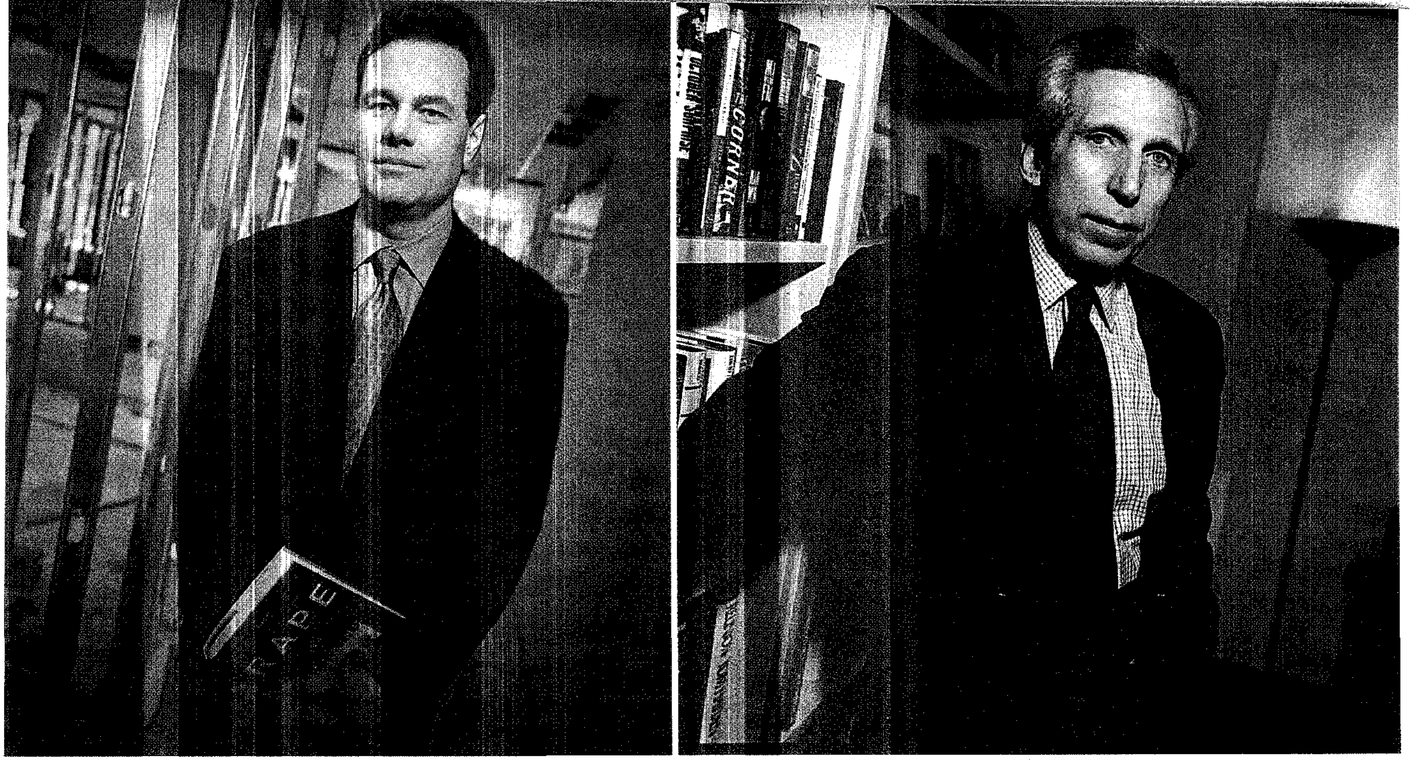
The resulting book, *Jacob Lawrence: The Migration Series,* qualified as a success in all the familiar ways, earning favorable reviews and selling out its first printing. More than that, though, it enticed Pearl more deeply into publishing. And it introduced him to a valued associate for the future.

Peggy Cooper, a woman colloquially known as the “culture minister” of black Washington, was at this time married to Conrad Cafritz, one of Pearl’s most important law clients. Hearing of the Jacob Lawrence project, she arranged for Pearl to meet her friend Henry Louis Gates Jr. Not only did Gates write the introductory essay for the book, but he struck up an instant friendship with Pearl.

“He was an intellectual as much as a businessman,” Gates remembers. “I liked talking to him about ideas. It was like talking to one of my colleagues. It was clear he was a person of the book.”

MOVING DOWN A RECEIVING line on the White House lawn in September 1994, Eli Segal found himself staring into a strangely familiar face. “I remember you,” he blurted out as he shook the man’s hand. “You’re Frank Pearl. I met you 30-odd years ago at the University of Wisconsin.” Segal was at the White House because he was the founding chief executive of AmeriCorps, the community-service program President Clinton was launching that day. Pearl

Photographs: opposite page, Steven Freeman; this page, Claudio Vazquez.



Refugees from mainstream publishing: Jack McKeown (left), Perseus CEO; and Peter Osnos (right) of PublicAffairs books.

merited his invitation because of his extensive voluntarism—and also perhaps because of his $100,000 donation of "soft money" to the Democratic Party in 1992. (He would make a comparable donation in 1996.)

Pearl arranged several dinner parties at his home in northwest Washington at which Segal could plead AmeriCorps's case with selected members of Congress. And when Segal left AmeriCorps in 1995 to return to private business, Pearl gave him free space in his offices.

From that vantage point, Segal could see how seriously Pearl took Counterpoint Press, which was headquartered in the same building. More than once, he heard Pearl say, "I don't view publishing as a hobby." The word he preferred was *mission.* So when Segal learned in October 1996 that his old friend Peter Osnos was resigning as the publisher of Times Books to try launching his own publishing house, he thought here was someone Frank Pearl ought to meet.

In twelve years at Random House, Inc., Osnos had published such authors as Natan Shcharansky, Boris Yeltsin, Tip O'Neill, and Stanley Karnow, counting on the occasional bonanza and a backlist of crossword-puzzle compilations and consumer reference to supply the profit margin his superiors dictated. The year 1995 persuaded him the system could not survive. Despite four best-sellers that collectively sold 650,000 copies—Robert McNamara's *In Retrospect* and Jimmy Carter's *Always a Reckoning* in hardcover; *The Contract With America* and the papal encyclical *The Gospel of Life* in trade paperback—Times Books barely broke even. Facing a shortfall of several million dollars on a $30 million budget in 1996, Osnos flung what he calls a "Hail Mary pass" with President Clinton's *Between Hope and History.* While the book-length essay made money because the president received neither an advance nor royalties, it sold only 140,000 copies of the nearly 500,000 printed.

"The system for publishing my kind of books had clearly run aground," says Osnos. "And it had nothing to do with the books. It had to do with economics."

Osnos came to believe that the audience for serious books was simply too limited to sustain the customary author advances and corporate overhead. Such well-reviewed Times Books titles as Jeff Birnbaum's *The Lobbyists,* Fred Emery's *Watergate,* and Larry Sabato and Glenn Simpson's *Dirty Little Secrets* sold fewer than 20,000 copies each in hardcover. Yet Osnos recognized that even a generous contract for a book with such limited earning potential—a contract of, say, $100,000—"is minimum wage for the author after you've paid your agent and spent four years on it."

So Osnos devised a system of syndicating the cost of a book contract among underwriters, much as Broadway shows are financed. In the Osnos scenario, an author could receive a contract of $250,000, with only a portion contributed by the publishing house. The rest might come from the PBS series *Frontline,* a partner of PublicAffairs, in exchange for the rights to produce a companion documentary; the 20th Century Fund, in consideration of a conference tied to the book; and even an online magazine like *Salon,* for serialization. By thus spreading the risks (or rewards) proportionally among the partners, Osnos could pay an author enough to support years of research and writing. "Can I do that for hundreds of books a year? No," Osnos says. "Can I do it ten or twelve times a year? Absolutely."

"HE WAS AN INTELLECTUAL AS MUCH AS A BUSINESSMAN," SAYS HENRY LOUIS GATES JR. "IT WAS CLEAR HE WAS A PERSON OF THE BOOK."

Just as Eli Segal had anticipated, the plan found a ready advocate in Pearl. Within hours of first meeting Osnos in October 1996, Pearl wrote to him, "I'm struck by how common our vision is." Osnos recalls, "I was comforted by the degree to which Frank understood the economics of the business—that this was a

Photographs: this page, David Barry (2); opposite page, Steven Freeman.

tough business, that it needed substantial changes to be viable.”

The pair met six more times in the following months. Ultimately, Pearl bought a majority interest in the nascent PublicAffairs, while Osnos landed such minority shareholders as ABC anchorman Peter Jennings and cable-television executive Robert Rosencrans.

The new company, announced to the public in May 1997, gave Pearl a line of books on politics, history, and social issues to augment Counterpoint’s strengths in fiction, religion, and the natural sciences. But Pearl’s plans didn’t end with Counterpoint and PublicAffairs. He envisioned a number of editorially independent houses, each with a precise, focused identity and the commitment to publish a limited list with great care—something like a constellation of North Points. In keeping with the North Point model, the model Jack Shoemaker had mistakenly abandoned in the heady wake of *Son of the Morning Star,* Pearl would hold his staff-to-book ratio to about 1:4, as compared with the 2:1 common in large houses. But unlike most independent publishers, which either sacrifice the economies of scale or have to sell out to conglomerates to get them, Pearl’s imprints would share such back-office functions as accounting and subsidiary rights in the way Random House’s constituents do.

AS A BUSINESS, PERSEUS STILL lacked a top and a bottom. The bottom of a publishing house is its backlist, a body of trade paperbacks that have long since recouped their advances and are still generating steady, predictable sales. The top is its CEO, a role Pearl did not want for himself.

Charles Hayward, a former publisher at Simon & Schuster and Little, Brown, was consulting for Perseus in 1997 when he introduced Pearl to Jack McKeown, a protégé from Hayward’s Simon & Schuster days. McKeown had gone on to HarperCollins but had quit recently after being passed over for the presidency of the company in favor of Anthea Disney, an executive whose bona fides included stints at *TV Guide* and the tabloid-TV show *A Current Affair.*

When they met, Pearl praised the serious nonfiction McKeown had published at Simon & Schuster, extolling in particular David McCullough’s *Truman* and James Stewart’s *Den of Thieves* as books that “moved the culture.” And McKeown, like Shoemaker and Osnos before him, perceived in Pearl a businessman unbeholden to the traditional economics of publishing and eager to learn from the harrowing experiences of this cast of corporate refugees. “You couldn’t spend five minutes with Frank Pearl,” McKeown remembers of their initial encounter, “and not know there was a first-rate financial mind at work.”

McKeown began consulting for Perseus in May 1997, and he became CEO four months later. From the moment he arrived, he set about acquiring a backlist “to give the revenue stream to grow your front list.” A lucrative one became available last spring when HarperCollins announced it would discontinue its Basic Books imprint. From McKeown’s years at HarperCollins, he knew that Basic’s backlist provided half the subsidiary’s annual revenue, one of the highest proportions in the industry. Basic’s titles in the social and behavioral sciences sold especially well to library, academic, and institutional markets, far from the caprice of the superstores. By late August, Pearl had signed a letter of intent to buy Basic. While the price was not disclosed, an imprint commonly costs twice its annual revenue, which was $10 million at Basic.

Less than four months later, Pearl signed a similar letter to acquire Addison Wesley’s General Publishing Group. Its backlist of 400 titles supplied about 45 percent of the group’s $20 million in annual revenue. In a general sense, the deal gave Perseus secure inroads in business, health, parenting, and popular psychology; more specifically, it provided such cash cows as T. Berry Brazelton’s *Touchpoints, Dr. Susan Love’s Breast Book,* and *Take Care of Yourself,* by Donald Vickery and James Fries.

WHILE PEARL’S NEW PUBLISHING house manifestly lacks the movie idols, military heroes, and fallen spin doctors who have been passing for authors recently, it can already boast one certifiable literary luminary. Through much of the mid-nineties, Henry Louis Gates Jr. made the rounds of major publishers, trying to find a believer in his longtime dream—a print and multimedia reference work on Africa and the African diaspora, the *Encyclopedia Africana.* Neither Gates’s own credentials as a Harvard scholar and *New Yorker* writer nor the growing sales for black authors from E. Lynn Harris to Toni Morrison persuaded a single house to buy the project. Gates pitched the encyclopedia to Frank Pearl, who in the four years since they had met had built a company capable of taking on such an ambitious project.

On the strength of his own reputation and the CD-ROM demo, Gates eventually came away with a commitment from Perseus to produce the encyclopedia in both print and multimedia formats in 1999. He also came away with something else.

“Frank said, ‘What about an imprint devoted to African and African-American studies, broadly construed?’ ” Gates recalls. “And would I be interested in being involved? It took me about two milliseconds to say yes.

“Anybody my age has seen two or three cycles since 1968 of boom and bust in the publication of books by and about the black experience,” Gates continues. “So I never trust the trend. Even now, when you have several black writers on the best-seller list, the larger houses are concerned about finding the next Toni Morrison. Their commitment to moderate-selling books is always a question. I’d always wanted to intervene with some publisher to ensure that books in the midrange will continue to be published. Frank offered that. I’d be a fool to turn it down.”

Pearl not only hired Gates as editorial director of the new imprint, Civitas, but gave him an ownership stake in it and a seat on the Perseus board. For his part, Gates led Harvard’s veritable all-star team of black intellectuals to Civitas. He encouraged Orlando Patterson, a Harvard sociologist who won the 1991 National Book Award for *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture,* to sign with Perseus for his trilogy on race in America. The first volume, *The Ordeal of Integration,* was published in late 1997 to admiring reviews. Civitas will also publish a collection of lectures on African-American culture by Cornel West, another Harvard colleague of Gates’s.

A personal bond has grown alongside the professional one. Last June, when Gates had two tickets to the final game in the NBA championship series between the Utah Jazz and the Chicago Bulls, he invited as his guest Frank Pearl. “We saw Michael get the trophy,” Gates says of the great Jordan, still glowing at the memory. So, of course, did 20,000 fans and a throng of media. Which could only have pleased Frank Pearl. He was where he plainly prefers to be—at the center of events, in rarefied company, and utterly unnoticed. ▬

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THE LAST ROMANTIC
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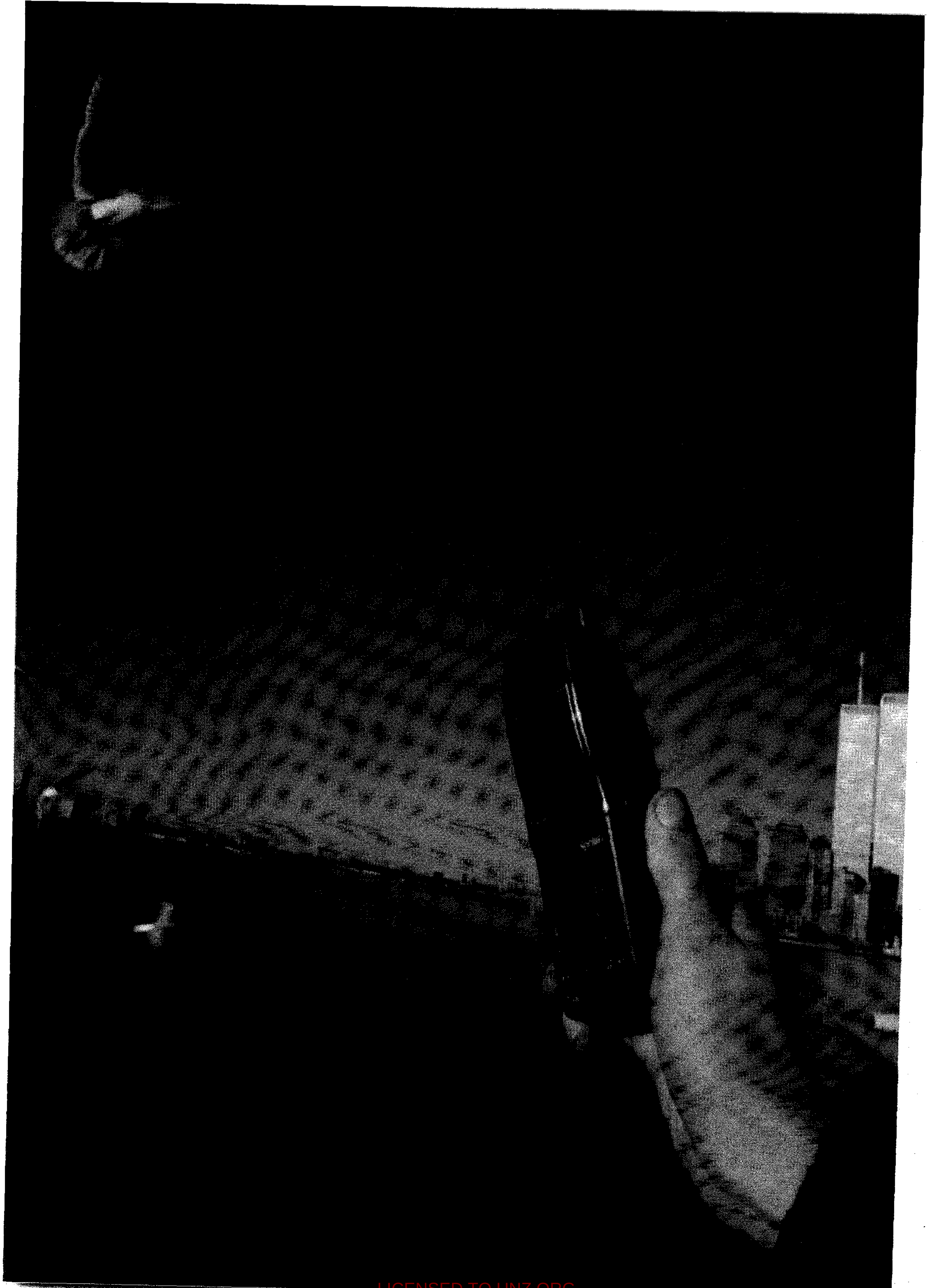
THE HARD CELL

Cellular service plans seem almost specifically *designed* to baffle. Our hype-free guide to going wireless will help you sift through all the static.

BY MICHAEL MAREN

IF YOU'VE ALWAYS SWORN THAT YOU WOULD BE THE LAST person in New York to get a cellular phone, it's not too early to start shopping. Like VCRs and fax machines, the wireless phone is well on its way from luxury status symbol to commonplace accessory. It's now possible to walk down Madison Avenue—or Avenue B—talking into a handset without everyone wondering, "Who does that jerk think he's trying to impress?" ▪ Today, people just look away, shamed to silence by the fact that they, too, are carrying, somewhere, one of those little devices, or at least secretly desire one. This change has been brought about by mass-market competition, which has forced prices downward over the past twelve months. Some analysts see another 5 to 15 percent drop coming this year. ▪ I had no intention of starting 1998 with a wireless phone in my pocket. Trying to be a rational consumer, I had planned to delay my purchase until

PHOTOGRAPH BY
KRISTINE LARSEN



regular-phone fees rose to meet falling cell-phone rates. Then I became impatient and lowered the bar, finding justification in the news that pay phones are going to start costing more (they went up to 35 cents in New Jersey last November, and it's just a matter of time before Bell Atlantic starts charging that FCC-approved rate in New York). A one-minute call on most cell phones—at certain times of day, with the right calling plan—is cheaper than that. And anyway, it's impossible to find a working pay phone when you need one. Armed with this rationalization, I went out and made my purchase.

Competition has lowered prices, of course, and it's also resulted in more companies' offering more options and calling plans. The newspapers are daily filled with ads that suggest that every service is the cheapest and has the longest range. Are the wireless companies trying to confuse consumers? Yes, in a way. Each is playing to its own strengths. The different calling plans make a simple cost-comparison chart difficult—and that's exactly the point.

Walk into any cell-phone dealer, from Radio Shack to an Omnipoint store, and a good salesperson will ask you where and how often you plan to use the phone, then suggest the best calling plan for your needs. There are four major companies offering wireless service in the New York market: Omnipoint Communications, Sprint PCS, Bell Atlantic Mobile, and AT&T Wireless Services. Omnipoint and Sprint are PCS (personal-communications services) networks. That means they use a specified portion of the radio spectrum that was auctioned off by the FCC last year. PCS in and of itself is really nothing special. What *is* special is that these two PCS carriers are digital networks. AT&T and Bell Atlantic also offer digital services, but they do it by transmitting digital signals on their existing radio frequencies, which results in occasional data-traffic jams.

ONCE you amortize the cost of a digital handset over several years of service, the "free" or inexpensive analog handsets don't look so cheap anymore.

ONE WORD: DIGITAL

DIGITAL SYSTEMS HAVE SOME DISTINCT advantages and one huge, if temporary, drawback. If Prince Charles had used a digital phone, the world might never have learned of his fantasies about being Camilla's tampon. Standard analog conversations can be picked up by anyone using a cheap scanner.

The other reason to go digital is that digital phone codes are impossible to clone. Many analog users have had to suffer the indignity of having a phone number stolen, cloned, and used by hundreds of strangers running up tens of thousands of dollars in calls. Companies battled the crisis by requiring PIN numbers on analog phones, but who really wants to punch in an extra code on top of the endless stream of numbers already required?

If that's not enough, digital carriers are offering additional services, with more on the way. Omnipoint and AT&T digital already offer alphanumeric paging on cell phones. All the digital services also throw in voice mail (so you can collect messages when you're out of range or your phone is turned off), caller ID, and other services. If you like a lot of bells and whistles, Omnipoint, Bell Atlantic, and AT&T offer packages that include such extras as stock quotes, sports scores, news, and e-mail on your little screen. Sprint will be adding similar services sometime this year.

Photograph by Evan Kafka.

The most obvious advantage of digital is clarity: From a busy Manhattan sidewalk, the sound quality is often as good as if you were calling from your desk.

The drawbacks? A small one is that the digital handset itself is generally more expensive than the analog. But once you amortize the cost of a handset over several years of service, the "free" or inexpensive handsets that come with analog service don't look so cheap anymore.

The larger problem is that digital systems are relatively new and generally limited to large cities and major highways. Digital carriers are putting up antennae as fast as they can find space for them, but for the short term, there are gaps in the system in certain rural areas.

Sprint lets you get around this problem by buying a dual-mode phone (you must specify this option; otherwise, you'll get a single-mode digital-only handset), which switches to analog if you go out of digital range. Sprint does not have an analog network, so you can find yourself on the AT&T analog system without knowing it (though Sprint handles billing for these AT&T calls, so you won't get more than one bill). AT&T and Bell Atlantic both switch you seamlessly between their analog and digital systems (the digital handsets they offer are dual-mode). Omnipoint likes to boast that its system is the only one that is 100 percent digital, which isn't a good thing if you're in rural Vermont and really need to make a call.

If you travel a lot, you may want to stay with analog or get yourself a dual-band system. When you do roam with a digital system and find yourself in a place with access, costs tend to be lower. Sprint's digital-network home area extends to Boston, so you can call from there without so-called roaming charges. (Again, you'll lose digital service at a number of spots between here and there, and get switched over to AT&T analog network.) Omnipoint is the most New York–centric of the systems. If you go to another city, you'll be dealing with a separate company that has an agreement with Omnipoint. But the roaming charges (currently 69 cents a minute within the U.S. and Canada) are less than what most traditional cellular providers charge (Bell Atlantic, for instance, charges 99 cents a minute plus any applicable long-distance charges).

TALK IS (NOT) CHEAP

WITH MOST PLANS, THE MORE you talk, the cheaper it is per call. As you shop for your wireless service, your main question should be how many minutes of airtime a month you plan to use. Then, once you come up with a number, double it. Everybody uses his cell phone a lot more than he plans to, and the companies know that. If you can't trust yourself, Bell Atlantic, Sprint, and Omnipoint offer prepaid plans that choke off your monthly access when you use up your budget. The big boys introduced this payment option after Urban Wireless, a scrappy start-up, successfully introduced prepaid access last year (see "Wireless Chic," at right).

Most companies offer flat fees based on allotted airtime, then charge a hefty fee for additional usage. For example, Sprint PCS offers 90 minutes of airtime for a flat $30 monthly fee. Your ninety-first minute will cost you 45 cents.

Remember that airtime is more than just the amount you actually talk. It includes the time the phone on the other end is ringing. That doesn't sound like much, but it adds up. In addition, all of these companies round your airtime up to the next minute.

Sprint has made things simple by not dividing airtime into peak and off-peak. AT&T, on the other hand, provides free off-peak (after 9 P.M.) and weekend airtime in some of its plans.

DIALING FOR DOLLARS

RATES ARE DROPPING CONSTANTLY, and companies are offering better and better promotions to entice customers, but don't expect your wireless carrier to call you and let you know the next time it drops rates. Once you sign up with a carrier, watch its ads and promotions, and phone as soon as you see a better deal—in most cases, a carrier will try to accommodate you even if you have a contract.

One of the biggest problems with wireless phones is that the rapid growth in the industry means that the people selling the service often don't know what they're talking about. For example, on a recent visit to the Bell Atlantic Mobile store on the Upper West Side, I found that the saleswoman kept focusing on the cool features of the various handsets and seemed oblivious to the fact that some were digital and others analog. I also stopped into Nobody Beats the Wiz and Radio Shack to talk about Sprint's service and found a wide range of expertise among salespeople. Some didn't have a clue about what the service actually was. For the most part, you should know what you want before you walk into a store.

Omnipoint's sales staff, on the whole, seemed much more knowledgeable and accessible than the others. They answered the phones quickly and provided ready and accurate information. Sprint's phone sales staff—"customer advocates," they're called—also seemed to know what they were talking about.

In the end, I went with Sprint PCS. The price was right, and it works in the three cities (New York, Boston, and Los Angeles) where I spend the most time. ■

WIRELESS CHIC

Cell phones have always been marketed as lifestyle accessories. The message to consumers has been, You're so busy (call your assistant), so important (call your clients), and so caring (call your kids) that you need to stay connected all the time. The harried urban professional was the demographic companies wanted when prices were high and status was a premium people were willing to pay for. The big companies continue to market this way, seemingly oblivious to the fact that their products have been developing a kind of street chic. Advertising execs and bond traders aren't the only people who need to stay connected.

Now a bunch of young guys has decided to connect with the rest of the market. "Our message is 'A cell phone costs as much as a pair of sneakers,' " says Urban Wireless's marketing director, Peter Chu, college dropout and entrepreneur. Peter, along with his brother Paul (now CEO), Asheem Aggarwal, and Jae Kim, formed the company in the spring of 1997. They cut a deal with Omnipoint Communications to remarket their service and got a European company to jazz up some Ericsson handsets in bright colors. Then they loaded the phones with $25 in ready-to-go airtime, stuck them in canisters, and put them in stores, where they sell for $130 to $150. Customers buy them, switch them on, and start calling; with most phone companies, you need to call for activation and wait while they run a credit check to determine whether they're going to allow you to get service. When Urban Wireless customers run out of airtime, they simply go back to one of the stores—there are some 200 locations in the tristate area, including beeper stores—and purchase more, in $30 or $50 increments. They're portable pay phones. None of Urban's customers will ever be surprised with a $500 bill at the end of the month. In fact, none will ever get a bill.

Urban's first customer was signed on May 9, 1997: a French photographer with no credit record. There are now more than 25,000 subscribers, and 5,000 to 6,000 new customers are being added each month in New York City. (The company is also expanding into Boston and Philadelphia.) And when Urban's customers call customer service, they're going to speak not to a sweet-talking Texas girl but to kids from their neighborhoods, many of whom are working at their first jobs. The company has 48 employees, most of them under 30. It recently moved from a small midtown office to a 5,000-square-foot SoHo loft that it's already outgrown; Urban's also opening its first retail store, at 63 Spring Street, on March 1.

THEIR CALL: **Prepaid-service pioneers Jae Kim, Asheem Aggarwal, and brothers Peter and Paul Chu at the Urban Wireless headquarters in SoHo.**

Perhaps the biggest compliment paid to Urban's strategy has come from the bigger companies that have now begun to offer a prepaid option via calling card. The kids at Urban say they're not worried, and they've got plans to stay ahead of the market. "Three months in this business is like three years," says Aggarwal. "That's long-term planning." M.M.

Photograph by Kristine Larsen.

BEST BETS

The best of all possible things to buy, see, and do in the best of all possible cities

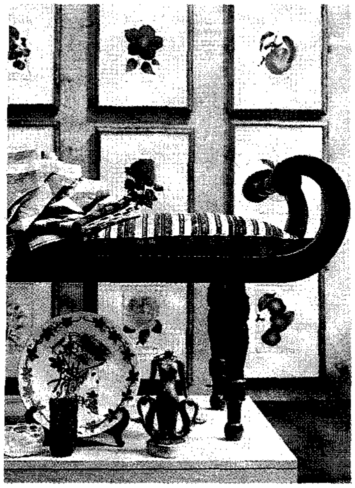
BY CORKY POLLAN

SETH THOMAS
U.S. NAVY

War Time

Luddites take note. These clocks aren't electric, battery-operated, or self-winding. They're eight-day wind-ups that graced U.S. Navy ships during World War II. The casing is black Bakelite, and the front glass plate is hinged for setting and winding ($900 to $1,300).

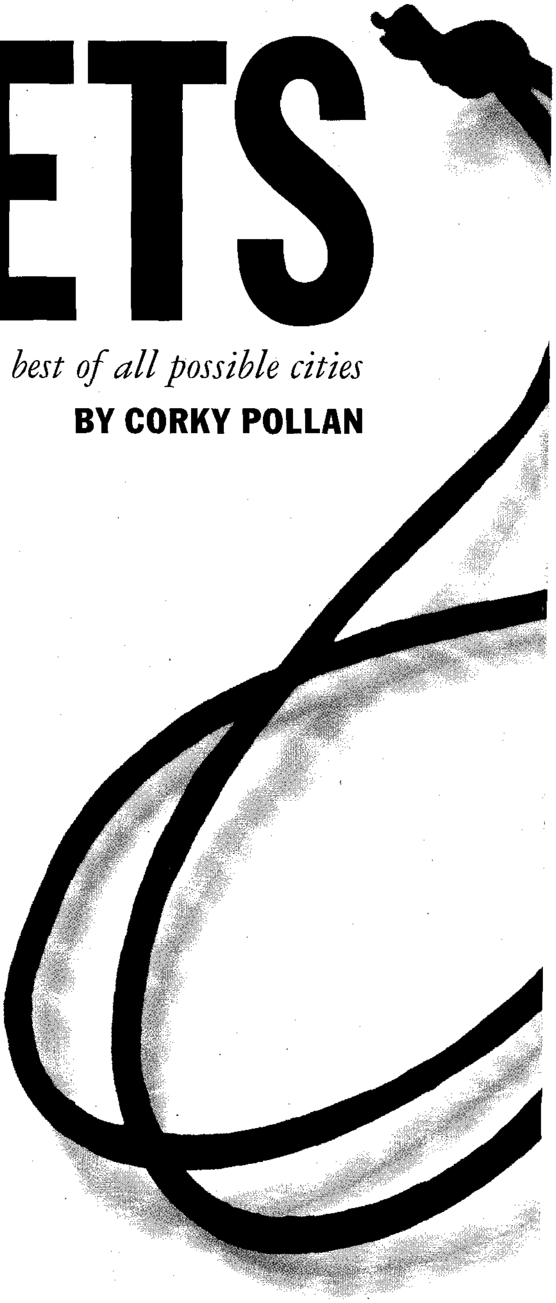
C.I.T.E. HOME/*100 Wooster Street/431-7272*



Collect Calling

It's not just the name that sets the Orange Chicken apart from a legion of new antiques stores. Unlike the rest of the breed, Brice Brown's shop deals primarily in seventeenth- through nineteenth-century works, with only a sprinkling of retro pieces. Though the store's name is playful (it was inspired by a game Brown invented in fourth grade), the owner is a serious collector. Eclecticism rules, so there are old-master drawings, eighteenth-century Chinese porcelains, nineteenth-century Venetian glassware, a Kimbel & Cabus cabinet, and Stieglitz photographs. Among the multiples are glass compotes of every size and 5,000 bolts of vintage silks purchased from an old tie factory (from $30 for a yard of silk to $240 for a framed botanical to $1,200 for a Jens Risom chair to $25,000 for a Herter Bros. table).

THE ORANGE CHICKEN/*152 Franklin Street/431-0337*



A Light at the Opera

Stephen Burlingham understands the needs of high society—he's the great grandson of Louis Comfort Tiffany. He knows that ladies at the opera may want to peek at the program, *but he also knows that,* being ladies, they would never want to disturb their seatmates with harsh rays of light. So Burlingham has created the L'Opera pendant. This sterling-silver *bauble hangs from a satin cord, and a mere touch* of the center circle sends out a tiny red laser beam that illuminates *only* the program notes ($295).

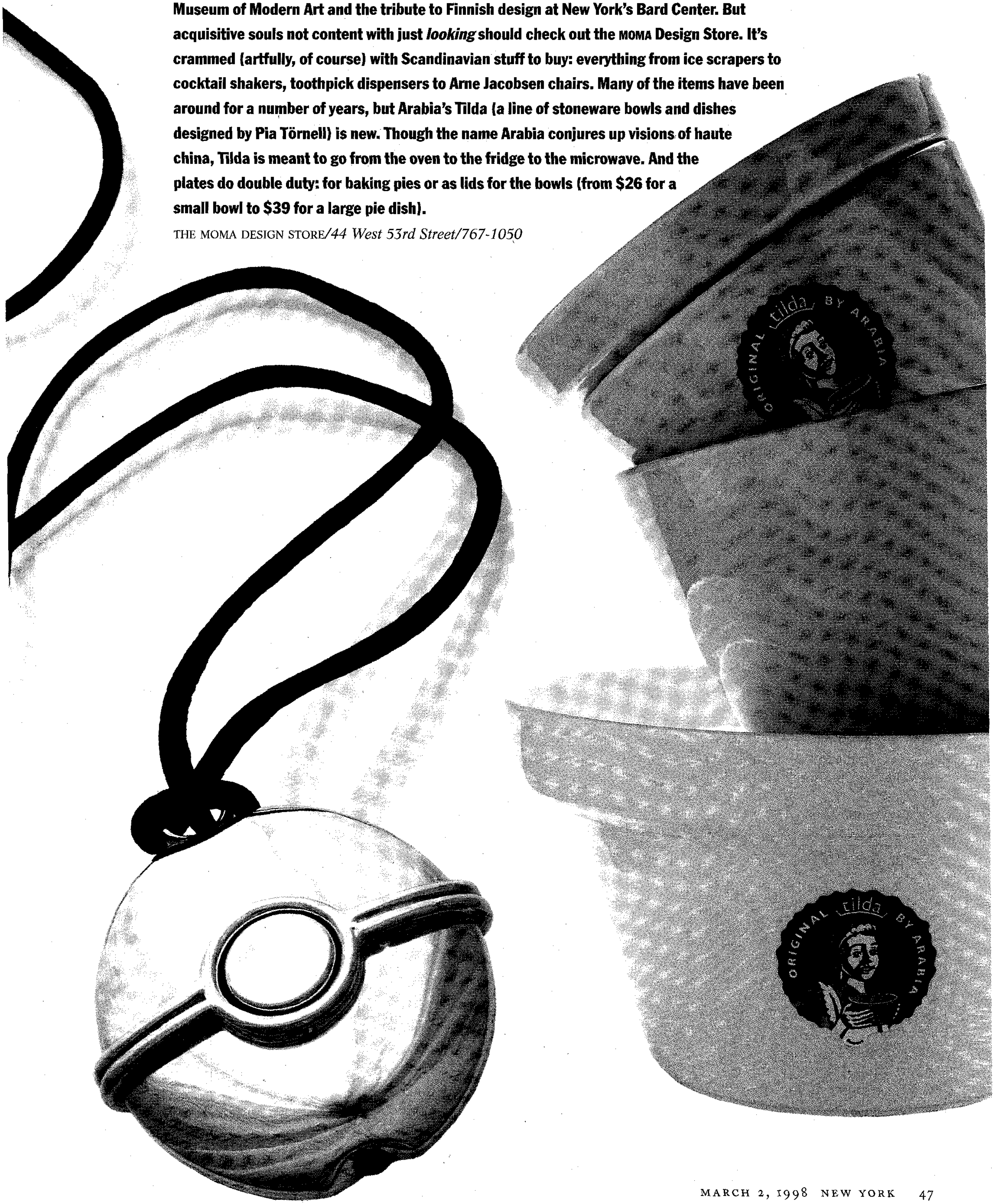
SAKS FIFTH AVENUE/*Main floor*

Photographs: clockwise from bottom left, Kenneth Chen; Norman (3).

Nordic Stack

The city's in the midst of a Nordic revival, what with the Alvar Aalto retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art and the tribute to Finnish design at New York's Bard Center. But acquisitive souls not content with just *looking* should check out the MOMA Design Store. It's crammed (artfully, of course) with Scandinavian stuff to buy: everything from ice scrapers to cocktail shakers, toothpick dispensers to Arne Jacobsen chairs. Many of the items have been around for a number of years, but Arabia's Tilda (a line of stoneware bowls and dishes designed by Pia Törnell) is new. Though the name Arabia conjures up visions of haute china, Tilda is meant to go from the oven to the fridge to the microwave. And the plates do double duty: for baking pies or as lids for the bowls (from $26 for a small bowl to $39 for a large pie dish).

THE MOMA DESIGN STORE/*44 West 53rd Street/767-1050*



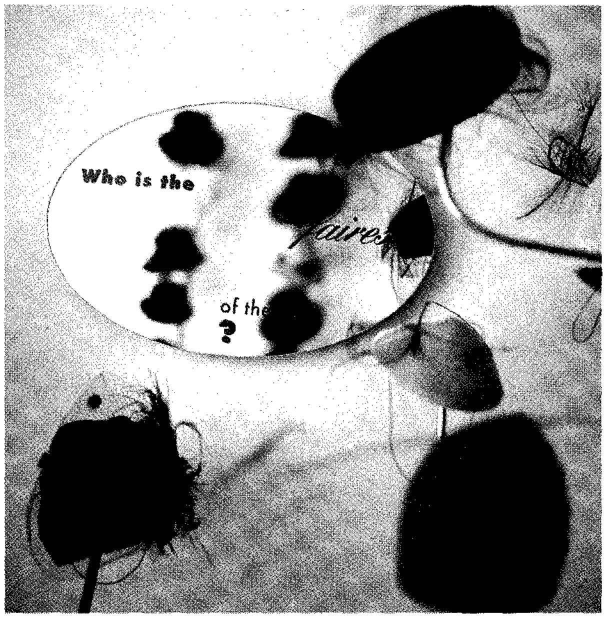
SALES & BARGAINS

ONDINE COHANE

Special Events

Cashmere sweaters, *dressy hats, opulent fabrics: For serious purchases you don't make often, let us help you* **choose the best.**

CASHMERE IS ONE OF THOSE luxury items that even the normally money-conscious shopper will drop serious cash for. Lucien Pellat-Finet's sweaters have the added bonus of looking as sexy as they are warm and soft (case in point: Madonna is wearing one of them on the cover of this month's *Vanity Fair*). Cashmere items include: two-ply women's cardigans, were $585, now $292.50; round-neck long-sleeve sweaters, were $510, now $255; men's T-shirts, were $560, now $280. *Lucien Pellat-Finet, 226 Elizabeth St. (343-7033); A.E., M.C., V.; Tues.–Sat. 11–6, Sun. noon–5; 2/24–3/8.*



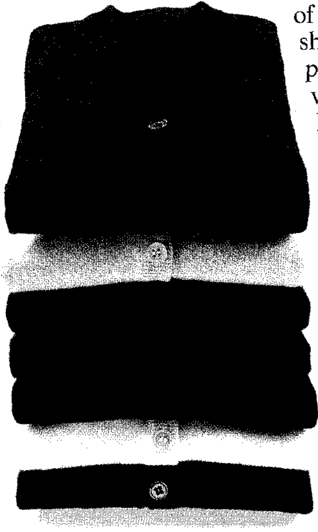
Demure goes downtown: Linda Pagan's hats and Lucien Pellat-Finet's cashmeres take the stuffiness out of dressing like a lady.

Leave Your Hat On

LINDA PAGAN KNOWS HOW TO wear hats with style. She also has that special knack of pairing them with the right faces. So customers trust her judgment—and remain loyal for years. Her sale includes: Hat & Soul's "Mongolian" hat, was $225, now $180; Jennifer Hoertz's "flop top" hat, was $188, now $149; Jacqueline Lamont's "Caroline" hat, was $245, now $167. The sale does not apply to custom orders. *The Hat Shop, 120 Thompson St. (219-1445); A.E., M.C., V.; Mon.–Sat. noon–7, Sun. 1–6; 2/23–3/2.*

Cleaning House

AFTER A YEAR OF CULLING the very best of its donations, Housing Works is gearing up for its spring-preview sale. All furniture, clothing, porcelain, and antiques will be 50 percent to 80 percent off original prices. Line up early: People start coming hours in advance. Proceeds benefit homeless people with HIV. Each of the three locations takes a Tuesday turn at the sale. *Housing Works, 143 W. 17th St. (366-0820), 2/24; 306 Columbus Ave. (579-7566), 3/3; 202 E. 77th St. (772-8461), 3/10; A.E., M.C., V.; Tues. 5–8.*



The Story of Ruth

RUTH CAPLAN USUALLY SELLS HER INTERIOR-design fabrics and drapery only to the trade. But she needs to move some of it out of her showroom, so she is opening up to the public for a few days: silk velvets, retail $140 a yard, here $36–$40; silk charmeuse, retail $100 a yard, here $10–$15; trims, retail $60–$150 a yard, here $15–$30. *Ruth Caplan Ltd., Fine Arts Building, 232 E. 59th St., fourth floor (826-3756); cash only; Mon.–Fri. 9–noon; 2/23–2/27.*

The Gold Room

KEN AND ESTHER GOLD—the husband-and-wife team behind Stardust Antiques—have made their store a welcoming place to explore. All of their china, stemware, and pottery is going on sale: cut-crystal bowl, was $225, now $175; complete set of dishes (including serving pieces), was $225, now $100; Roseville vase, was $150, now $100. *Stardust Antiques, 38 Gramercy Park (677-2590); A.E., M.C., V.; Mon.–Fri. 11–7, Sat. noon–5; 3/1–3/31.*

Couched in Luxury

DONGHIA—AN UPSCALE FURNITURE company—is opening up to the public for the first time, with deep discounts on its great designs. Sofas, were $7,000– $9,000, now $3,000–$4,500; leather club chairs, were $4,300–$5,200, now $2,000–$2,700; arm- and side chairs, were $1,200–$1,850, now $400–$950. *Donghia, 40 W. 40th St. (718-747-1656); A.E., M.C., V.; Wed.–Sat. 9:30–6; 2/25–2/28.*

Horse and Carriage

LOOKING FOR A WEDDING DRESS? CYNTHIA C., Robert Legere, and M&B Hairlooms are teaming up for a joint sample sale on their wedding numbers and some eveningwear. Sale includes: Cynthia C. all-satin wedding dress, retail $2,200, here $1,000; Robert Legere cocktail dress, retail $700, here $200; M&B headpieces, retail $300–$700, here $100–$300. *Cynthia C. & Co., 222 W. 37th St., second floor (966-2200); A.E., M.C., V.; Thurs.–Sat. 10–6; 2/26–2/28.* ■

Note: In last week's "Sales & Bargains" column, the phone number for D'Amico Foods was omitted. It is 718-875-5403.

DO NOT PHONE: Send suggestions to Ondine Cohane, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022-6999, six weeks before the sale. Only sales exclusive to "Sales & Bargains" and not previously advertised or published elsewhere will be considered.

Photographs: top, Amy Freeth; bottom, Norman.

MOVIES **DAVID DENBY**

The Sound of Muzak

Adam Sandler says dirty words kids can relate to, but he's really a young softie, as his ultimately sentimental 'The Wedding Singer' attests.

"When did she get to be a beauty? When did he grow to be this tall?": Barrymore and Sandler in *The Wedding Singer.*

THE NAUGHTY PROFANITIES that one used to hear 40 years ago in the routines of a Catskills comic anyone can now hear in the albums and movies of Adam Sandler, who is a kind of suburban-sandlot descendant of the old foul-mouthed entertainers. Sandler is young, and his comedy is directed at kids; there's an occasional touch of knockabout cruelty in it as well as a love of the grotesque. Comedy has gotten wilder—or at least coarser—in the past few decades, and I suppose that some of Sandler's jokes would have made the blue-rinse ladies of 1954 cringe more than laugh. Yet Sandler, it must be said, has a soft spot in his heart for old ladies. In his 1996 movie *Happy Gilmore,* he played a wildly undisciplined failed hockey player, an orphan raised by his grandma. When Grandma's house gets impounded by the IRS, he joins a professional golf tour in order to raise money and reclaim the house. Part of the joke of the movie is that this uncouth young man is just sick with love for his grandmother. In Sandler's new comedy, **The Wedding Singer,** set in 1985, he's a suburban New Jersey entertainer at weddings and "functions," a charmer with damp long hair who makes eyes at aunts and uncles as he sings. On the side, he gives voice lessons to an old lady (Ellen Dow), and at the end of the movie, in celebration of her fiftieth wedding anniversary, she, with perfect rhythm and plenty of gusto, sings the Sugarhill Gang rap song "Rapper's Delight." You go, girl! Surely Mel Brooks was never that nice to old ladies.

Adam Sandler can scream, but he doesn't overwhelm us with noise and screeches like Jim Carrey. Huge and alarming, with wildly thrashing limbs and menacing teeth, Carrey wants to swallow the world. Sandler is big, too—rangy and athletic—but he's not that big; he seems like an overgrown suburban boy much in need of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, and a room under the roof to mope in. He's basically a mild fellow who wants to get along and make his way in the world, though from time to time, weird aggressions burst out of him. In *Happy Gilmore,* he wears a hockey uniform even on a snazzy golf course, where he occasionally breaks into club-throwing rages and hires, as a caddy, a filthy bum who takes baths in the fairway water. He's not a conscious rebel; he just hasn't been socialized yet. At the tee, Sandler steps into his drives like a hockey player gathering momentum for a slap shot. Fore! The ball travels more than 400 yards. An outsider, a pretender, Adam Sandler is a seeming loser who has too much determination to be kept down. He's a loser who's really a winner. Other men hate him—he's the adolescent they have painfully left behind—but girls think he's cute. Like Buster Keaton and other great comics, Sandler has a shy, nuzzling way with the ladies. He spends most of *The Wedding Singer* making eyes at Drew Barrymore, who plays a plump angelic blonde.

Part of this comic is a nice Jewish boy. Even the profanities are nothing more than the outrages perpetrated by an adolescent at the family dinner table. The dirty words add savor to the meal—certainly this kid expects to be forgiven before dessert. Like Allen Sherman 30 years ago, Sandler sings silly satirical songs the whole family can enjoy. On Sandler's album *How Did I Get Here?* there's a Hanukkah song with lines like "O.J. Simpson / Not a Jew / But guess who is? / Hall-of-famer Rod Carew." That's a pandering lyric, actually, that the blue-rinse ladies at the Concord might like. Adam Sandler wants to please. On the same album, there's also an extremely profane ballad, in reggae style, dedicated to a terrible lemon of a car. This song is not a put-down of reggae—its mild shock lies in the dirty words falling into the lulling regularities of the ballad.

Photograph by K. Wright/New Line Cinema.

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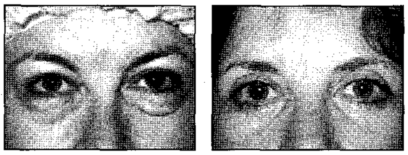
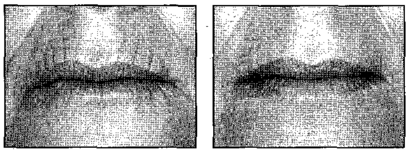
Arthur L. Millman, M.D.
Surgeon Director

BEFORE & 8 DAYS AFTER LASER BLEPHAROPLASTY, BROW LIFT & FACIAL SKIN RESURFACING



BEFORE & 8 DAYS AFTER UPPER & LOWER LID LASER BLEPHAROPLASTY

BEFORE & 7 DAYS AFTER LASER WRINKLE REMOVAL



C u e

What are the new films and where are they playing?
Broadway, Off Broadway, or Off-Off Broadway? Music under the stars or on the stage?
How about a comedy club for a few laughs? Want to be moved by classical art or avant garde art?
How about dinner after the show? Let's take the kids out - where should we go?

CUE - The weekly guide to everything that's worth seeing and doing in the most exciting city in the world. See it every week in

NEW YORK MAGAZINE

Cavities really bite.

What are you waiting for? 1-800-DENTIST

1-800-DENTIST is a licensed servicemark of Applied Anagramics, Inc. Paid for by participating dentists.

Middle-class kids love Adam Sandler because his foul mouth is something they know they can get away with.

On the other hand, the nice Jewish boy has a streak of anger; he can't be pushed. In *The Wedding Singer,* Sandler begins one of his songs before a crowd in a quiet, mousy voice and then breaks into a murderous punk whine, passing back and forth throughout the song, schizophrenia as entertainment. In *Happy Gilmore,* the nice boy and the surreal bad boy were held in balance; in *The Wedding Singer,* despite a few outbursts, the nice boy wins out, and not with the best results. It's a pleasant movie—very pleasant, in fact—but soft as a down quilt. The wedding singer is not only the life of the party; he's a part-time shrink, a peacemaker who brings people together. Of course, no one takes him very seriously. Why would anyone wed a man who sings at weddings? Will this schlumpy guy defeat an overconfident Wall Street type and win Drew Barrymore? The movie is a tame affair, shot on calm, manicured streets; the interiors are decorated in pastels. Adam Sandler, a gifted young man, may be comfortable in the suburbs, but if he's going to become a big comedy star in the movies, he's got to either blow the place sky-high or get away and find a more challenging turf. He makes comedy about the underside of blandness. In *The Wedding Singer,* the blandness threatens to take over.

In brief: THE FIRST MOVIE WRITTEN AND directed by young Jake Kasdan, **The Zero Effect,** turns out to be a surprisingly intense comedy about a sort of modern-day, digital Sherlock Holmes. Bill Pullman, of the cringing demeanor, plays the world's greatest private eye, a shambling, neurotic genius, immensely needy, entirely guarded, a man who acts with dauntless savoir faire out in the field only to retire to a vaultlike apartment filled with Tab and enormous bags of pretzels. This super-nerd, with his assistant (Ben Stiller), undertakes to protect a rich predator (Ryan O'Neal, who is very good) from blackmail. The movie's comic tone is productively unstable—sneakily funny, discordant, at times romantic, filled with a young man's love of the uncanny and the endless power of cool. . . . At the end of **Sphere,** the three principals—Dustin Hoffman, Samuel L. Jackson, and Sharon Stone—agree, for the good of humanity, to forget everything that has happened to them in the movie up to that point. This is a pact I can only rush to join, and with exactly the same motive. There are some things that humankind is just better off not knowing about. ▬

David Denby's 1998 reviews are available at **newyorkmag.com,** *along with movie news, a schedule of upcoming openings, and more.*

THEATER JOHN SIMON

Super *Freak*

John Leguizamo's spiky new play is a madcap monologue masquerading as biography; Sam Shepard's 'Eyes for Consuela' is a provocative puzzler.

JOHN LEGUIZAMO HAS PROVED, IN VARIOUS MEDIUMS and genres, that he is versatile, witty, inventive, and charming. He writes and delivers funny dialogue within his monologues, interrupts his acting to execute nimble dance steps both elegant and satirical, and creates characters with facial expressions, vocal mannerisms, and body language that blend into a riotous lingua franca. He brings these skills to his Broadway show **Freak,** which purports to be semi-autobiographical and is surely, in Anatole France's great phrase, a story truer than truth.

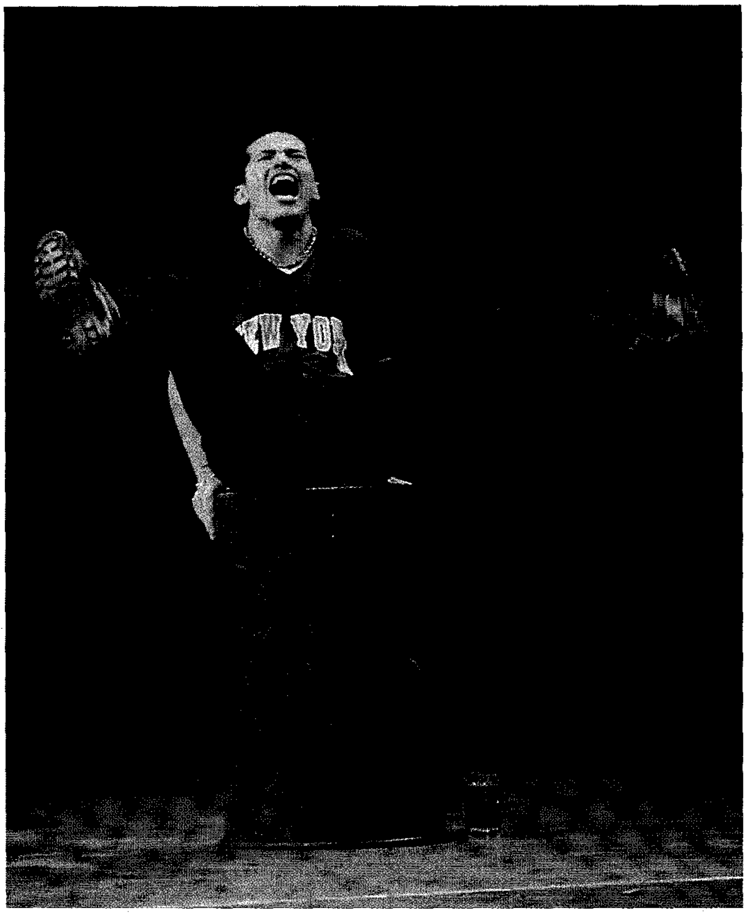
We follow here, with the help of Jan Kroeze's lighting and Wendall K. Harrington's projections, the life of "John Leguizamo" from gamete to gamin, from beleaguered kid to burgeoning individual, from Hispanic underling in changing but always hostile neighborhoods to self-possessed young actor whom even his tyrannical father comes grudgingly to respect. There are the three stages to sexual adulthood: the "accidental" discovery of masturbation ("I was cleaning it, and it went off"), the initiation by a German trollop of Wagnerian dimensions ("And she makes the international cunnilingus sign at me"), the attempt to pick up an Irish lass in a bar ("You know the type, redheaded, freckled, drunk").

There are even a few surreal elements, but mostly plain, free-swinging humor—e.g., "I'm glad you are in therapy, but you're remembering somebody else's life," or this, from an ethnic antagonist, "I've heard about you Mexicans buying up all the Cabbage Patch dolls for their birth certificates." Yet what you will remember most is Leguizamo prancing about acrobatically, doing accomplished accent work and impressions, and eliciting infectious complicity from every soul in the audience. There are occasional longueurs, derivative patches, and bits more crude than funny; all in all, though, *Freak* pricks the converted as deftly as it preaches to the unconverted and gets away with it.

THE MOSCOW ART THEATER BROUGHT ITS CENTENARY PRODUCTION of **Three Sisters,** staged by its artistic director Oleg Yefremov, to BAM. Chekhov can be done, according to his wish, as mostly comedy; or, in the Stanislavsky manner, as mostly melancholy. Yefremov has found a tertium quid: He makes the play peculiar, grotesque, even faintly sinister. Sometimes this works; more often it registers as senseless exhibitionism. But it is different, which seems to be the dubious idea.

The sisters now comprise an overage, almost senescent Olga; a mannish, prosaic, aggressive Masha (even if she, or someone else for her, plays Scriabin beautifully); and a dopey little duckling of an Irina. The dashing, theatrical, pathetic Vershinin is now a brash bore; the cynical loser Chebutykin is now a huge loose cannon; the decent, doomed Tuzenbach is a nervous twerp; the uncouth Solyoni is a balding smiler; the defeated, paunchy Andrey is a slim, sometimes scary, ranter; Natalya, the wallflower turned shrewish wife, is a sexpot wildly dry-humping her husband; Fedotik is now a vaguely tragic figure, and his sidekick, Rode, a seducer carrying on an unscripted affair with a nonspeaking Prozorov maid.

Valery Leventhal has designed a handsome, reversible set (turntables turned to good use), equally fine inside and out. But the Prozorov house is no longer on a street where fire and panic can occur; now it's surrounded by a birch wood. In the end, the house melts into the forest, leaving a clearing for the sisters to whirl about in like maenads, well apart and each in her private anguish. Interesting, but hardly what Chekhov wrote.



Trash and flash: John Leguizamo in *Freak.*

Oddly, Kulyigin is played exactly as Chekhov made him—as a pitiful, self-deluding prattler—and thus emerges as the most genuine character of all. Finally, simultaneous translation is a good thing, but not as Fay Greenbaum monotonously and stumblingly drones on and on, ruining Carol Rocamora's respectable translation.

Photograph by Joan Marcus.

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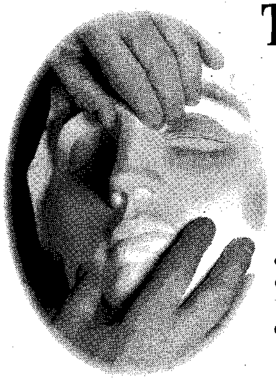

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THEATER

ALTHOUGH IT IS THE CONTINUATION OF A STOry by Octavio Paz, **Eyes for Consuela,** in its mix of humor and horror, swagger and lopsided poetry, is vintage Sam Shepard. It has two drawbacks: It is too drawn-out and quite preposterous. The latter, however, is forgivable. The play, after all, is a fantasy, complete with bicycle-riding ghost, though we tend to forget this on account of its jokily natural lingo. Where else would we encounter a Mexican bandit with a double family life—one on each side of the Rio Grande—who indulges in sociophilosophical dialectics with his captive gringo?

Still, unlike at recent Shepard excursions, I never felt excluded or left behind. The bandit Amado, who gouges out blue (only blue!) eyes from visiting Yanquis to coax smiles from his otherwise mournful spouse, Consuela (he has done it sixteen times so far), is a thinker of Tocquevillian stature. He is also an equivocator, unwilling to give up the view that Henry's eyes are brown, not blue. Then again, Henry, the American, seems just as delusional, trying to use logic with a Mexican *bandido.* Not to mention his faith in taxis, telephones, and police in the Mexican jungle.

It is all about seeing and not seeing, about various forms of blindness: physical, emotional, existential. And about the sacrifices love entails. It is quirkily unpredictable and laughingly unsettling. Not even the old, one-eyed hotel proprietor—seemingly the entire staff—is quite what he appears to be. But against Santo Loquasto's dreamy décor, teasingly lighted by Jennifer Tipton, with telling guitar riffs by Josué Pérez, and under Terry Kinney's highly kinetic direction, the play is as adhesive as a burr, as headstrong as a burro, and as savory as a burrito.

As the two men made kin by marital problems, David Strathairn (Henry) is as splendid as usual, and Daniel Faraldo (Amado), new to me, a wonderful surprise. Jose (not Josué) Perez is a pungent old rascal, and as Consuela, who says little but gazes and moves intoxicatingly, Tanya Gingerich is so bewitching as to make any excess committed on her behalf perfectly plausible.

"ENCORES!," THAT EXCELLENT SERIES OF semi-staged musicals, came a bit of a cropper with **Strike Up the Band,** a mediocre 1927 George and Ira Gershwin–George S. Kaufman musical. Even beefed up with numbers from other shows, the score is spotty and the satire mostly toothless. There were a couple of superbly choreographed numbers by Jeff Calhoun; an achingly funny scene flawlessly enacted by Lynn Redgrave and Philip Bosco; generally good singing, dancing, acting, and orchestra playing; and one first-rate all-round performance by David Elder, hitherto unknown to me. ▬

ART MARK STEVENS

Nowhere Man

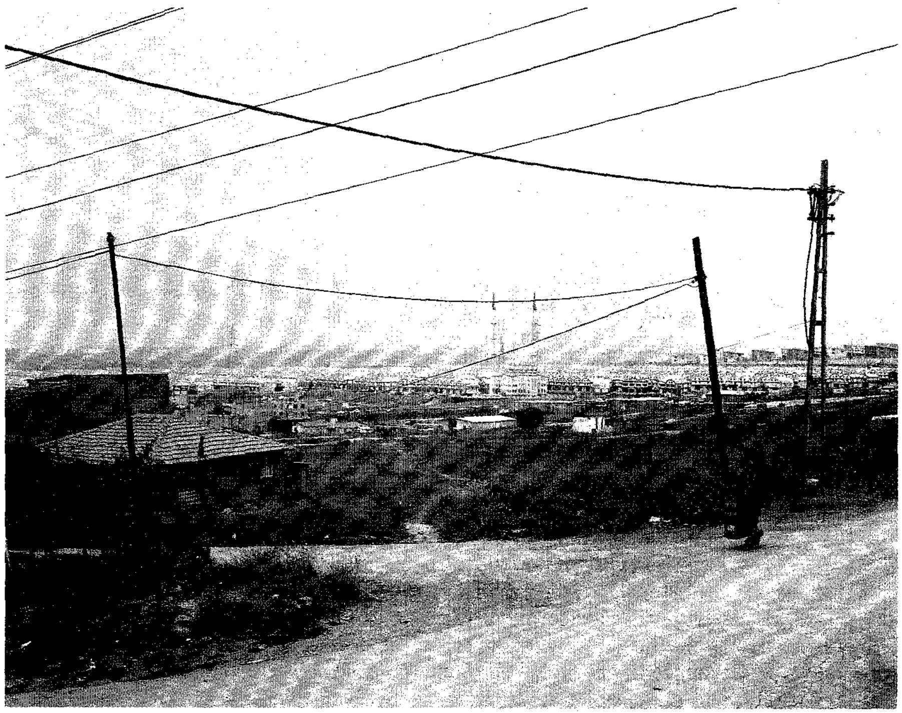
In his photographs and light boxes, Jeff Wall illuminates the vague in-between spaces of contemporary culture.

GERTRUDE STEIN'S FAMOUS QUIP ABOUT OAKLAND, California—"There is no there there"—is the most telling description we have of a key aspect of modern life. She was describing a sprawling city that lacks center and focus, where the landscape changes while remaining the same, but her succinct phrase also evokes a similar vagueness in our metaphysical space. Not only is there no there there when you walk through the lobby of a Holiday Inn, but there is also no there there when an immigrant is caught between cultures or when a postmodernist copies a Corinthian capital. The artist **Jeff Wall** is making "there-less" space his particular territory, working within the interstices of modern culture and capturing its betwixts and betweens. He can give such space a saving form, a convincing presence that makes us take notice.

In his current exhibition at the Marian Goodman Gallery, Wall, who is 51 years old, is showing four "light boxes" and four large black-and-white photographs. He is best known in the art world for making the boxes, which are essentially large slides illuminated from behind; they recall the glowing advertisements found inside Grand Central station. (The black-and-whites, which are not illuminated, represent a new formal direction for the artist.) Not surprisingly, Wall's images seem to lie in some indeterminate space just outside the photographic tradition. They often refer to the history of painting. They are sometimes rather cinematic. They appear partly documentary and partly staged, at once spontaneous and calculated, highly self-conscious and thoughtless. Sometimes, he works with stories that emphasize the lost pieces of a narrative. In a diptych light box called *A Partial Account,* for example, a secretive transaction (perhaps illegal) seems to be taking place. But we cannot begin, tell, or end this story. It remains forever open-ended, like a passing glance from a stranger or a snatch of conversation heard on the street.

The pictures I like best look more artless. They are without obvious razzle-dazzle or surprise. The artist hardly seems present; one's initial impression is "Well, so what?" This approach to there-less space is the subtlest, the one that best conveys its character. A showier hand will often overwhelm the material, calling attention to the clever artist or billboarding some portentous comment about, say, the ennui of modern existence. In *Housekeeping,* one of the black-and-white photographs, Wall depicts a motel room that looks like any motel room. It is neat but cheaply built; the bedspread would feel synthetic to the touch. In the rear, a maid opens the door to what looks like a small vertical broom closet. We see her from the back. The sort of mundane moment, in short, that is never recorded. Except that this image claims the eye. The rectangular shapes hold the room in place. And the maid's pose, one suddenly realizes, is almost classical—like a caryatid's. Suddenly, the dead hand of the past awakens the present.

Many of Wall's concerns come together in the strongest image in the show, *A Villager From Aricaköyü Arriving in Mahmutbey-Istanbul, September, 1997.* In this large light box, the artist depicts a villager walking into an area that's being transformed, helter-skelter, into an industrial region. The photograph is documentary in feeling, yet also juiced up through careful planning: Wall paid the young man to reenact his entry into Istanbul. One of millions of people around the world leaving villages to search for work in the big city, he seems trapped in the seam between cultures. A timeless mosque rises in the distance; so does prefab housing. We are on intimate terms with the sprawl that engulfs him—this scrubby roadside nowhere is found throughout the world. The light box itself is a product of commercial shininess, yet the image is that of a dusty youth, hungry for work, at a crossroads. A number of paths branch out around him. A confusing crisscross of wires sings above his head. Here is an Everyman in no-man's-land. ■



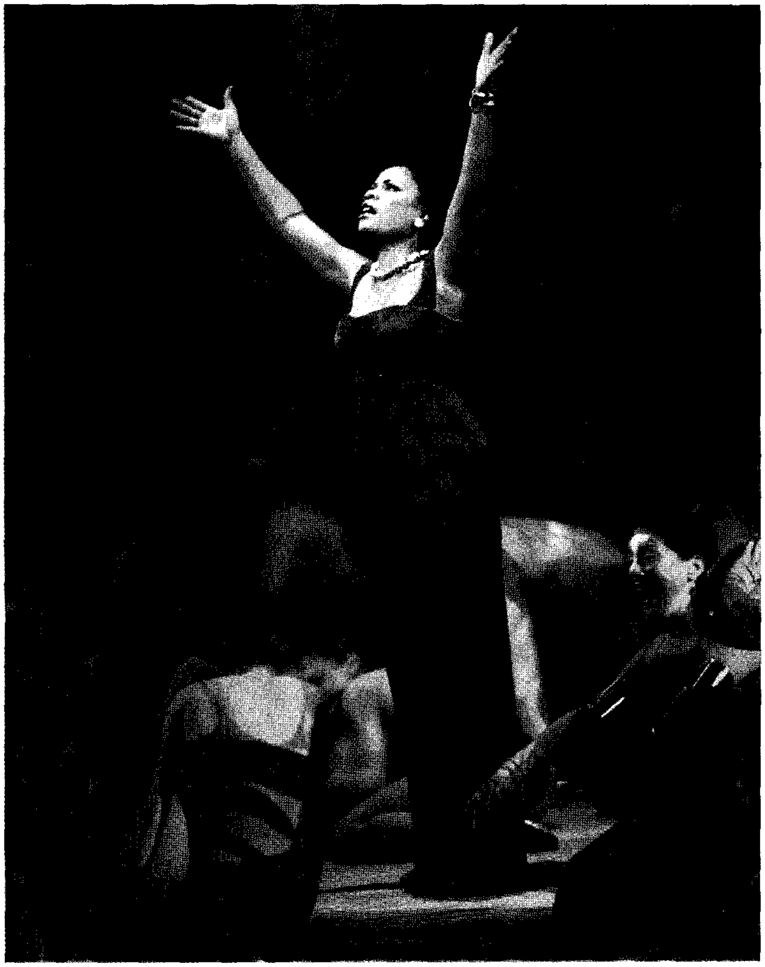
Wall street scene: The artist's *Villager From Aricaköyü.*

Photograph courtesy of the Marian Goodman Gallery.

PETER G. DAVIS

Good Hair Day

The Metropolitan's production of 'Samson et Dalila' is full of drama and suspense (not least of all when Plácido Domingo strives for those high notes).



Tress temptress: Denyce Graves as Dalila.

Photograph by Winnie Klotz/Metropolitan Opera.

IT TOOK JUST ONE NEWSPAPER STORY about the Metropolitan's imminent **Samson et Dalila** production to heat up opera chat in cyberspace, where there was much huffing and puffing in advance about the Met's latest wallow in Eurotrash. Well, so much for prejudgments—"*À moi! Philistins! À moi!*" as Dalila calls out at the end of Act Two. The new *Samson* turns out to be a bold, theatrically compelling piece of work, in a class with the company's recent stagings of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—but then, a lot of people hated those provocative productions as well.

Of course, there has always been a suspicion in some quarters that Saint-Saëns's popular score is more oratorio than opera. I disagree, and apparently so do Elijah Moshinsky, who directed, and Richard Hudson, who designed the sets and costumes. In fact, the production faithfully reflects the singular structure of the work itself, an opera erected on a sequence of great musical blocks as muscular as Samson himself and as imposing as the temple pillars the blinded hero pulls down. The tone is set by the drop curtain—a palimpsest of Hebrew and Aramaic lettering savagely disfigured by a gigantic black smear—and the hot, angry colors of Hudson's painterly sets continue to develop variations on that theme of culture clash and the doomed love affair arising from it. It may be that the fiercely vivid African motifs resemble what one sees in *The Lion King*, also designed by Hudson, but any accusations of a made-to-order look-alike won't wash, since the Met's *Samson* was in the planning stage long before that Broadway hit opened.

Ever since his underappreciated debut back in 1980 directing Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Moshinsky seems to have been trying to please the Met more than himself, with such wishy-washy efforts as *Ariadne* and *Otello*. Perhaps that will change now that the company has begun to welcome a diversity of production styles and is prepared to stand by the results. In any case, Moshinsky has been sufficiently emboldened to come up with his most original work to date, an approach that has the courage to present the opera as Saint-Saëns wrote it, a cleverly manipulated lyrical ritual constantly in danger of fracture and destruction. Even the chorus has been sensitively grouped to generate maximum theatrical tension—the choreographic assassination of Abimelech in Act One is especially effective—and the heat is sustained right up to the final cataclysmic curtain.

The purely musical report is less happy. The temple luckily collapses before Plácido Domingo's climactic B flat threatens to do the same, and elsewhere the tenor's increasingly unavailable high notes continue to be a problem. Apart from that, Domingo's Samson is reliably sung, although he might work a bit harder to project some of the great hero's dilemma in the face of Denyce Graves's sultry but strangely generic Dalila. Graves underplays the Philistine temptress, making her motives fascinatingly ambiguous, but she sings with such a paucity of vocal nuance and technical savvy that Dalila's dangerous personality fails to register. The only other role of consequence in the opera is the evil High Priest of Dagon. Sergei Leiferkus looks horrifying in his startling white makeup, but his scratchy baritone still

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sounds dreadfully inelegant in French opera. Leonard Slatkin conducts efficiently, pacing the extended musical periods with care for their architectural shape but with little appreciation for the score's instrumental color and drama.

L'OPÉRA FRANÇAIS DE NEW YORK, OUR MOST enterprising and stylish presenter of operas in concert, was at it again in Alice Tully Hall not long ago, romping through Offenbach's **Barbe-bleue.** "In concert" is perhaps a misleading description of these lively affairs. Although performed in front of an orchestra, the work was fully acted out; the singers appeared in costume; and Carol Bailey's production design was more than just a suggestion of a set—a comic-strip graveyard motif with portraits of Bluebeard's five deceased wives, draped in black crêpe, hanging on the back wall. It all worked wonderfully well, in part because Offenbach's zany opéra bouffes depend more on inspired singing actors than on elaborate décor, and in part because the piece itself is such an irrepressibly tuneful send-up of the old medieval tale. *Barbe-bleue* is perhaps less well known than the other masterpieces the composer wrote between 1864 and 1868—*La Belle Hélène, La Vie Parisienne, La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein,* and *La Périchole*—but its musical invention is no less rich.

Most of the ingredients were familiar from past Opéra Français successes, and once again the soufflé was prepared with flair and a sure feeling for Offenbach's idiom that the French themselves seem to have lost. Christopher Alden's direction may have laid on the slapstick too broadly for some, but these ribald pieces always respond better to clever vaudeville turns than to twee humor. Besides, the cast's timing and unbuttoned physical approach to the fun could not have been more polished, especially that of Hugues Saint-Gelais as the put-upon Bluebeard and Michael Sokol as Popolani, the mad alchemist who has been merely drugging the ex-wives rather than poisoning them. Best of all, there was Angelina Réaux as Boulotte, the promiscuous village wench and prospective sixth wife, who runs the whole show. With an unclassifiable voice and a zaftig persona somewhere between Bette Midler's and Martha Raye's, Réaux is never likely to have a conventional operatic career, but Offenbach's exuberant heroines fit her zestful performing style to the ground. Perhaps what made the entire evening so theatrically coherent and musically enchanting was Yves Abel's conducting, which skillfully conjured up all the melodic tang and rhythmic fizz of this delectable score.

MORE CONCERT OPERA FOLLOWED ON THE heels of *Barbe-bleue,* two early Verdi works presented back to back one weekend recently in Carnegie Hall. Although operas by the young Verdi are no longer the rarities they once were, it's still salutary to hear them in a carefully prepared concert performance from time to time, even a work as familiar as his first big success, **Nabucco.** Conductor Robert Bass no doubt chose that score to show off his Collegiate Chorale. The chorus, in fact, is the dominant presence—the famous plaint of the Hebrew captives, "*Va pensiero,*" virtually became a national anthem during Italy's struggle for independence from Austria, and crowds of mourners spontaneously sang it at Verdi's funeral in 1901. Augmented by the Riverside Choral Society, the Chorale was indeed the star of the evening, the prayerfully whispered unison passages sounding no less awesome than the massed choral climaxes.

The soloists were mostly impressive as well. Lauren Flanigan may be jeopardizing her future by taking on such killing roles as Abigaille and spending her vocal capital so recklessly. Her soprano also lacks the cutting edge and sustaining power that this conniving villainess requires, but her fearless attack, secure register alignment, and theatrical abandon are, for now, ample compensation. Simon Estes has been busy elsewhere ever since his Met career petered out a decade ago; the fact that his bass-baritone has never sounded better in Zaccaria's music—rock-solid, rich-toned, and magisterial—must have surprised more than one local opera fan. Verdi baritones are not plentiful these days, but Donnie Ray Albert gave more than an honorable account of the overweening Nabucco, effectively savoring the role's lyrical warmth as well as its declamatory power.

EVE QUELER'S OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW York ventured into more obscure Verdian territory with **Jérusalem,** the composer's revision of *I Lombardi* for the Paris Opéra in 1847—a rewrite so substantial that scholars generally consider it a separate work. Determining which is the better piece is also an issue that will probably be of interest only to musicologists, but there's no doubt that *Jérusalem* has a tighter plot line and much fine new music, although a few jolting stylistic corners are turned along the way. Once again, Queler lost her star singer—Samuel Ramey—to illness. The bass was replaced by Gary Simpson as Roger, a respectable baritone but with little presence or resonance in the lower octave, where much of the music lies. In any case, the audience was more excited by tenor Keith Ikaia-Purdy as Gaston and soprano Sylvie Valayre as Hélène, both eager to make an impression as they pushed their young voices to the limit and sometimes beyond. ■

JOHN LEONARD

Bodies of Evidence

'The Ice House' offers up three mysterious women and one dead man; in 'The Long Way Home,' hitchhiker Jack Lemmon thumbs up his life.

AN HOUR OR SO INTO **The Ice House** (THURSDAYS, February 26 and March 5; 9 to 10:30 P.M.; Channel 13), one of the servants tells one of the coppers: "The difference between a prison and a fortress is that in a fortress, the doors are locked from the inside." Against the suspicious police, the vampire media, the local crazies, and the violent past, Streech Grange has locked its doors and barred its gates for the decade since a "selfish, vicious, charming" David Maybury disappeared without a trace. Inside various wings of the manor house, three remarkable women sit on their secrets like majestic birds on Fabergé eggs. Or maybe the Brontë sisters. When a mutilated body—"putrid, black, disgusting," and, for most of the mini-series, unidentifiable—is discovered by the gardener in a long-abandoned ice house, these women will once again be besieged.

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS
POLICE LINE DO NOT CROS

Clueless: Daniel Craig (left) and Corin Redgrave have their own secrets in the PBS series *The Ice House*.

They are Phoebe Maybury (Penny Downie), who may or may not have been abused by her missing husband; Anne Cattrell (Kitty Aldridge), a radical journalist who walked away from her noisy career to move in with Phoebe after David vanished; and Diana Goode (Frances Barber), a designer who joined them in silence (except for the classical music), exile (gloomy and gothic), and cunning (not that it helps). While Phoebe got through one investigation without the tiniest apparent crack in her composure, she seems on the point of shattering as the second commences. Anne, a chain-smoking blonde tease, has hidden not only a bloody knife in her wall safe but also an envelope of compromising documents behind that wall safe. Diana may look like Cesare Borgia's sister, the Duchess of Ferrara, but she's short £20,000 and frantic about it.

Naturally, the villagers suspect these women of worse than murder—of witchcraft and lesbianism. Naturally, the handsome alcoholic police sergeant Andy McLoughlin (Daniel Craig) will fall in love, anyway, with Anne—who mocks him until she's almost murdered herself. Unnaturally, the morose Chief Inspector George Walsh (Corin Redgrave) insists on Phoebe's guilt in spite of every bit of forensic evidence that the mutilated body isn't even David's; Walsh, too, has a secret. The children who rush to Phoebe's side—febrile Jonathan (James D'Arcy) from medical school, anorectic Jane (Alexandra Milman) from Oxford—are too nervous to be trusted. And not even the servants can be relied upon to tell the truth.

Have I mentioned the shotgun shells, the "see-through radiators," the size 8 shoes, the mysterious condoms, the feral cats, the publican who seems to suggest he has slept with all three women at Streech Grange, the garage mechanic who blames Phoebe for the car-crash death of her parents, the vagrant in the checkered pants, the sobbing at night, or the rampage of vandalism? I haven't even mentioned the brick wall in the basement. Sink a shovel or stick a spade anywhere in Hampshire, and you encounter another body, another ambiguity, another justification for personal vengeance. And I omit the principal secret of this BBC/WGBH co-production of the Minette Walters novel. After a number of hospital romances, *The Ice House* was Walters's first murder mystery—although not, alas, the first to show up here on PBS—and also her best. Don't let your disappointment with *The Sculptress* deter you from a dark delight.

The Pentagon Wars (SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28; 8 TO 9:30 P.M.; HBO) wavers uncertainly between broad satire and savage exposé. From the nonfiction book by retired Air Force colonel James G. Burton, Jamie Malanowski and Martyn Burke have confected a teleplay about $14 billion of overspending on the design, development, and production of the Bradley Fighting Vehicle—a sort of troop-transport supertank—and seventeen years of test-rigging to con us into thinking it wasn't a death trap for anybody who happened to be inside when it came under enemy fire. At this metastasis of genuine scandal,

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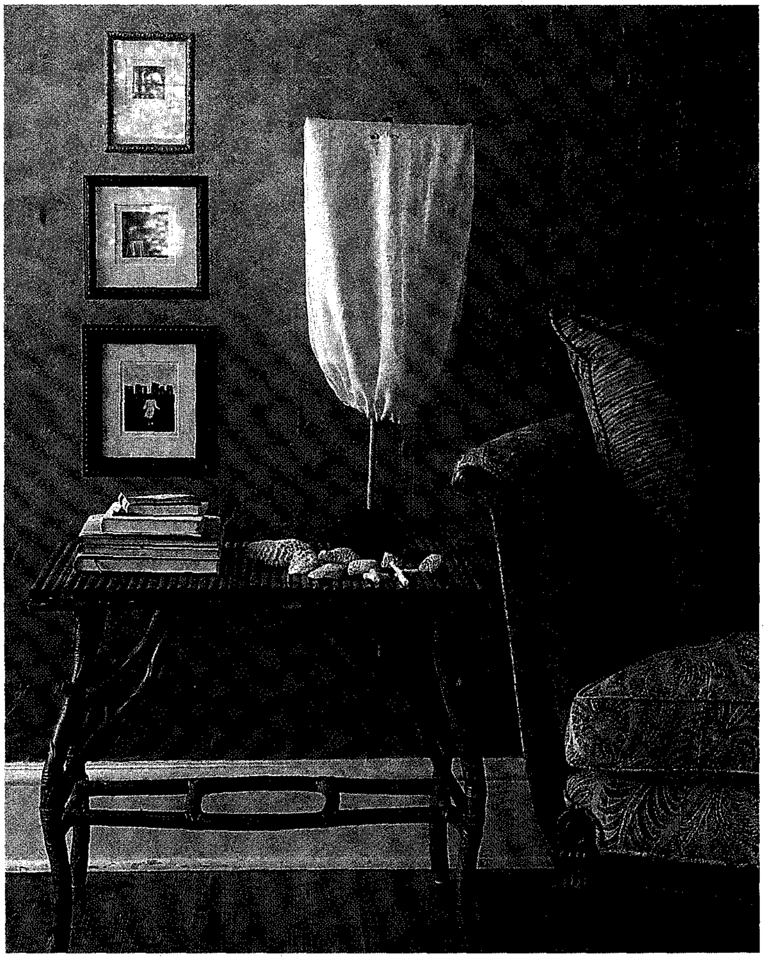

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comic styles, and military-industrial bungling and cover-up, we don't know whether to laugh or rage.

Part of the confusion is the fault of Richard Benjamin, who directs and also stars himself as Caspar Weinberger, Ronald Reagan's less-than-humorous secretary of Defense. Part is the fault of Kelsey Grammer, who insists on playing the perfidious Army general Partridge as an odd amalgam of Orson Welles and Captain Queeg, while Cary Elwes plays Colonel Burton as a straight-arrow whistle-blower transferred to Alaska for asking too many questions and Olympia Dukakis plays the chairperson of the House Armed Services Committee with an incredulity bordering on the comatose. There is a Deep Throat, afraid to go public with what he knows about the BFV but disgusted enough to alert Burton to fuel tanks filled with water, and ammunition filled with sand.

On the serious side, Israelis rewrite all the specs before they buy these lethal duds. On the burlesque side, one battlefield test turns sheep into instant mutton. And for Frank Capra purposes, the soldiers on the test range will conspire with Burton and sabotage Partridge, just in time for the Bradley to roll off to duty in the Gulf War as something more than a snowmobile with cleats.

IN **The Long Way Home** (SUNDAY, MARCH 1; 9 to 11 P.M.; CBS), we get Jack Lemmon as a retired cabinetmaker who ends up hitchhiking from Kansas to Carmel, California, in the unlikely company of New Age teenybopper Sarah Paulson. Jack's excuse is that he doesn't have anything better to do, his daughter-in-law (Kristin Griffith) fusses too much, and he just got a letter from the woman he really wanted to marry 55 years ago (Betty Garrett). Sarah's excuse is that her rich, wheelchair-bound, Emily Dickinson–quoting father (Peter Dvorsky) may be dying; her boyfriend isn't serious; and her expensive car was run off the road by a couple of predatory louts. Jack and Sarah constitute a quest. Together, they will relocate ultimate truth in the bosom of neglected family. The message on Sarah's sweatshirt is partially revealing: JUST SAY MAYBE. So is her father's Eleventh Commandment: THOU SHALT NOT TAP-DANCE. Glenn Jordan's direction of a William Hanley rewrite of a French telefilm I haven't seen, *Thomas Guerin . . . Retraite,* lets us enjoy two actors so comfortable in each other's company, we'd want them in our own family. Critics have nipped at Lemmon for years—he never grew up, or seems exhausted; he's too tenderhearted, or just a grouch—but I've never seen him sell a role short in anything on a big screen or a small one. ■

POP MUSIC BILLY ALTMAN

Case Studies

Three eighties-era pop songwriters are back: Peter Case, with a folk bull's-eye; Jules Shear, on a CD full of duets with talented pals; and riff-happy Tommy Keene.

SOMEONE ONCE JOKED THAT THE BEST WAY TO DESCRIBE Peter Case would be as "Bob Dylan in reverse." Case first got noticed on the front lines of the 1976–77 punk/new-wave wars as a member of the Nerves, a San Francisco trio best remembered for its Blondie-covered club hit "Hanging on the Telephone." Relocating to L.A. in 1978, he formed the Plimsouls, who flirted with national success in the early eighties and whose high-water mark, the frenetic, heart-in-mouth 1982 rave-up "A Million Miles Away," symbolized everything good about power pop that, say, "My Sharona" didn't. The Plimsouls disbanded in 1984, and when Case re-emerged as a solo performer two years later, it was as if he had been inhabited by another life-form—and not just because, in the interim, he'd become a born-again Christian. He'd found a new musical religion, too: folk.

Trading his electric guitar for an acoustic, Case began finger-picking his way back through time, writing idiomatic ballads about ramblers and rogues and determinedly regressing into the guise of the hipster troubadour—*The Man With the Blue Post-Modern Fragmented Neo-Traditionalist Guitar,* as the title of a 1989 album proclaimed. When he turned up on folk-steeped Vanguard Records in 1994—with a collection composed mostly of antiques such as "The Lakes of Ponchartrain"—he seemed to have finally brought it all back home. Trouble was, it was never completely clear what Case's specific *it* was, or to what end the voyage.

Until now: After rebooting himself with 1995's tentative *Torn Again,* Case, on his new album, **Full Service No Waiting** (Vanguard), realizes his folk vision quest—most fittingly with a work that is neither neo-, post-, nor fragmented anything. There are, to be sure, echoes of the whole sixties folk-blues aesthetic chiming away here: From Case's Mississippi John Hurt–meets–the–Reverend Gary Davis guitar-picking and the eternally Woody Guthrie–Dylanesque sound of his harmonica to the fiddles, dobros, jawbones, and harmoniums that swirl around him, the music is firmly traditional. Yet for the first time in Case's acoustic career, not a note sounds precious. His style is no longer the major point of his music; it's the appropriate tool of the trade.

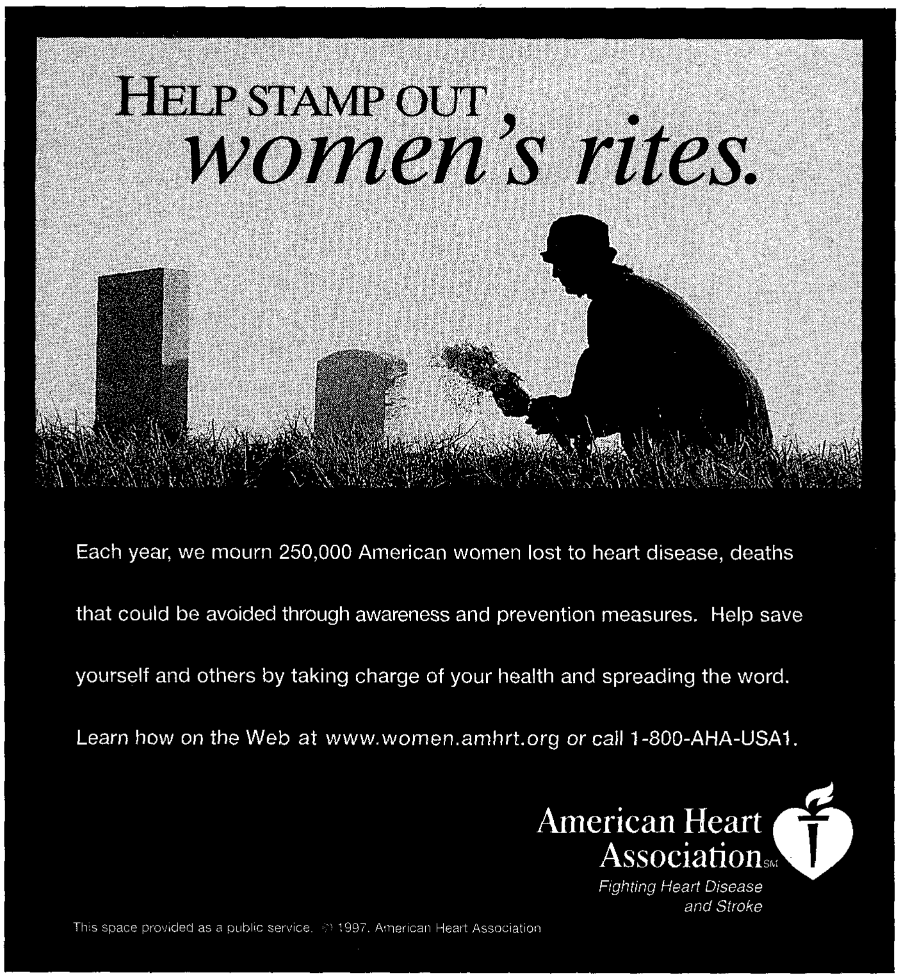
Case finds the road rising to meet him as he spins his autobiographical tales of opportunity, loss, hope, and redemption—tales that resonate deeply with both personal insights and universal truths. There's "See Through Eyes," a Proustian remembrance of rock-and-roll things past ("We laughed and threw it away / Now what would I do / For another pair of see through eyes"); the lilting, country-tinged "Beautiful Grind," about the romantic challenges of being married . . . with children ("I only see you when the lightnin' strikes"); and "Crooked Mile," a bluesy reflection on faith with the closest thing here to a religious message ("The mile still runs crooked / The highway's up above / And the only thing I've found that counts in this world is love. / Who's gonna go your crooked mile?"). On this stunning album, Peter Case makes the leap from romantic admirer of folk traditions to authentic practitioner. Reports that he's reforming the long-lost Plimsouls seem only natural for this windin' boy. After an achievement like *Full Service No Waiting,* he's younger than yesterday.

LIKE CASE, JULES SHEAR HAS HAD A DIZZYINGLY fitful twenty-plus-year career as a songwriter and performer. The Pittsburgh native debuted in 1976 with L.A. country-rockers the Funky Kings and by the end of the decade was fronting Jules and the Polar Bears, a pop-rock band that sounded (according to one critic) like "Jackson Browne backed by the Kinks." With a flair for hook-filled melodies and snappy lyrics, the Polar Bears tried (two albums and an EP) but barely made a ripple; stumped as to how to market them, their label simply threw them into the water with a gaggle of unrelated new-wave bands and forgot about them. Soon the disillusioned Shear had moved to New York to try his luck as a solo performer.

Bob Dylan in reverse: Peter Case, top, goes acoustic (again); songwriter's songwriter Jules Shear.

What Shear discovered when he began releasing fine albums like 1983's *Watch Dog* and 1985's *The Eternal Return* was that while not many people were paying attention to him, those who did tended to be other performers searching for quality pop material, which he had by the cartful: for instance, "All Through the Night," a

Photographs: top, courtesy of Vanguard Recording; bottom, Joanne Savio and Steven Hague.



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top-five hit for Cyndi Lauper in 1984, and "If She Knew What She Wants," which the Bangles charted with in 1986. Not surprisingly, Shear has since spent his time writing prolifically and recording sporadically—and oh, yes, he helped create, and was the original host of, a little thing on MTV called *Unplugged.*

Between Us (High Street) is an attempt to bring Shear long-overdue recognition, showcasing him in a collection of duets (hence the title) with some fourteen singers. The roster, mostly female, is impressive—Paula Cole, Rosanne Cash, Carole King, Suzzy Roche, and Margo Timmins, as well as fellow undervalued singer-songwriters Ron Sexsmith and Freedy Johnston—and so are many of the individual vocal performances. The achingly beautiful "The Last in Love" (which Cole takes through the roof) should get to even the most unsentimental listener, and the same goes for "Windows and Walls," a torchy ballad featuring up-and-comer Patty Griffin. Still, while the range of partners and song types is satisfyingly broad, that can't really be said of the music. Centered on Shear's spare acoustic guitar, the arrangements are demo-minimal, resulting in a sameness that diminishes the strength of the material. While it's great to hear Carole King soaring through the girl-groupy "How Many Times," one can't help imagining it with a full Spectorian treatment; and the Rosanne Cash duet, "Who's Dreaming Who," could have used a little more ranch dressing before being placed on the table. Of course, that would have made *Between Us* a grandiose affair, and quibbles and bits aside, it's a fittingly gentle showcase for a gentle-souled songwriter's songwriter.

TOMMY KEENE HAS BEEN KNOCK-KNOCK-knocking on power pop's door since the early eighties with the kind of loud and winsome guitar rock that invariably attracts raves from critics ever-nostalgic for the good old Big Star days (believe me, they weren't all that good) but few actual paying customers (and that's why). As evidenced by his latest, **Isolation Party** (Matador), the Washington, D.C.-bred, L.A.-based Keene's approach hasn't changed much since such noble but overlooked efforts as 1984's *Places That Are Gone* and *Back Again.* He's still referencing David Bowie glitter riffs (the "Rebel Rebel"-like "Get Out From Under You"), playing Boston-worthy twin guitar leads ("Battle Lines"), and generally tilting at the same windmills of the mind as ever ("Tuesday Morning," which quotes "Good Vibrations"). Then again, anyone who in 1998 can stir synapses to jump from Squeeze to the Korgis to the Gin Blossoms in under five minutes, as Keene does on "Take Me Back," deserves to get his scuffed-up Beatle boot in that aforementioned door. ▬

RESTAURANTS **HAL RUBENSTEIN**

Lo Mein Event

What's happened to Chinese food in the city over the years is nothing short of a tragedy. But dry your eyes and check out Shun Lee Palace and Chinatown's Natural.

MAY WHOEVER INVENTED THE WHITE CARDboard carry-out container spend eternity waist-deep in bean curd. For the devastation *The Jazz Singer* did to silent films and plastic surgery has done to Jocelyne Wildenstein, these insidious totes have wreaked on Chinese food—and New Yorkers' love affair with what was once a great cuisine.

One of the happiest shared memories of natives old enough to remember watching the Cartwrights ride the Ponderosa was going out for early Sunday dinner in Chinatown. The streets were really narrow, the language strange. And the notion of having dinner out—especially a dinner that didn't include either ketchup or Tater Tots—was beyond exhilarating. But the big fun was that the snort-and-giggle-named dishes (no kid kept a straight face when Dad said "moo goo") were as incredibly good as they were exotic. Spare ribs Mom let you eat with your fingers. Crunchy egg rolls. Was anything as weirdly wonderful as shrimp with lobster sauce? Yeah, fried rice.

At these faraway places with names like Bo Bo and Mandarin Inn, what was most appealing was not necessarily the quality of the ingredients, or even their unfamiliar composition, but the immediacy of the cooking. The MSG might have made us a little heady, but the real high was derived from how rich the flavors were. Everyone ate too fast, afraid there wouldn't be seconds left.

Now takeout menus stack up in pantries like old collection notices. Chinese food has become food for watching *Drew Carey* in your sweatpants. Why bother getting dressed? It doesn't taste any better when you head out to wherever you dial it in from. Regardless of what you order, or where you call—Teng Teng, First Wok, one of Charlie's many Moms—you can bet your last fortune cookie that all you'll taste is sog. Every single takeout dish, including the fried ones, is now steamed, sure to arrive at your door gummy, soy-saturated but otherwise underseasoned, oily yet steam-table-dehydrated.

Even the restaurants along and off Mott Street offer little relief, reflecting the merely adequate redundancy of the neighboring souvenir shops. True, Joe's Shanghai deserves its recognition, but its popularity has overtaxed the kitchen and staff.

So we ventured to the other end of the spectrum. Zagat and other notables regard **Shun Lee Palace** as the worthiest keeper of the wok-charring flame. And admittedly, it's affecting, even inspiring, to see Chinese food afforded the plush trappings that often backdrop other cuisines. We admire the precision with which the waiters polish and arrange the luxe table placements. And with a trustworthy guide (not hard to find, since few waiters here will fail you), the enormous menu yields many delights: fish soup, Shanghai-style wontons, truly giant prawns in black-bean sauce, sea bass in ginger and scallions, spare ribs, fragrant rack of lamb grilled in garlic and scallions.

However, this is the East Side, after all, where they refer to China as a booming market and not much else. Consequently, dishes like sliced duckling with ginger root are prepared as one might expect at Peacock Alley, while the sauce is so thick it smothers the poor genteel fowl. And delicious as it is, the rack of lamb seems unnervingly out of place on a menu alongside sesame noodles. As does the apple pie, listed below green-tea ice cream. It's not a failing. Shun Lee ably pleases a certain customer, with varying degrees of authenticity. It just isn't the sensory memory I was hoping for.

Instead, it is waiting for me on Allen Street. Chiu Kit Ma, his son Jackie, and their gracious and hardworking family may hate me for turning their six-table restaurant upside down after people read this, but **Natural Restaurant** is as welcome a discovery as a teahouse made of jade. General Tso and his chickens are nowhere to be found.

Note, with relief and amazement, that when your watercress soup with pork

NATURAL
RESTAURANT
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Dishes like butterflied shrimp (top) make the fluorescent-lit interior at Natural tolerable, if not warm and cozy.

Photographs: top, Holly Lynton; bottom, Kenneth Chen.

Love Needs No Pedigree

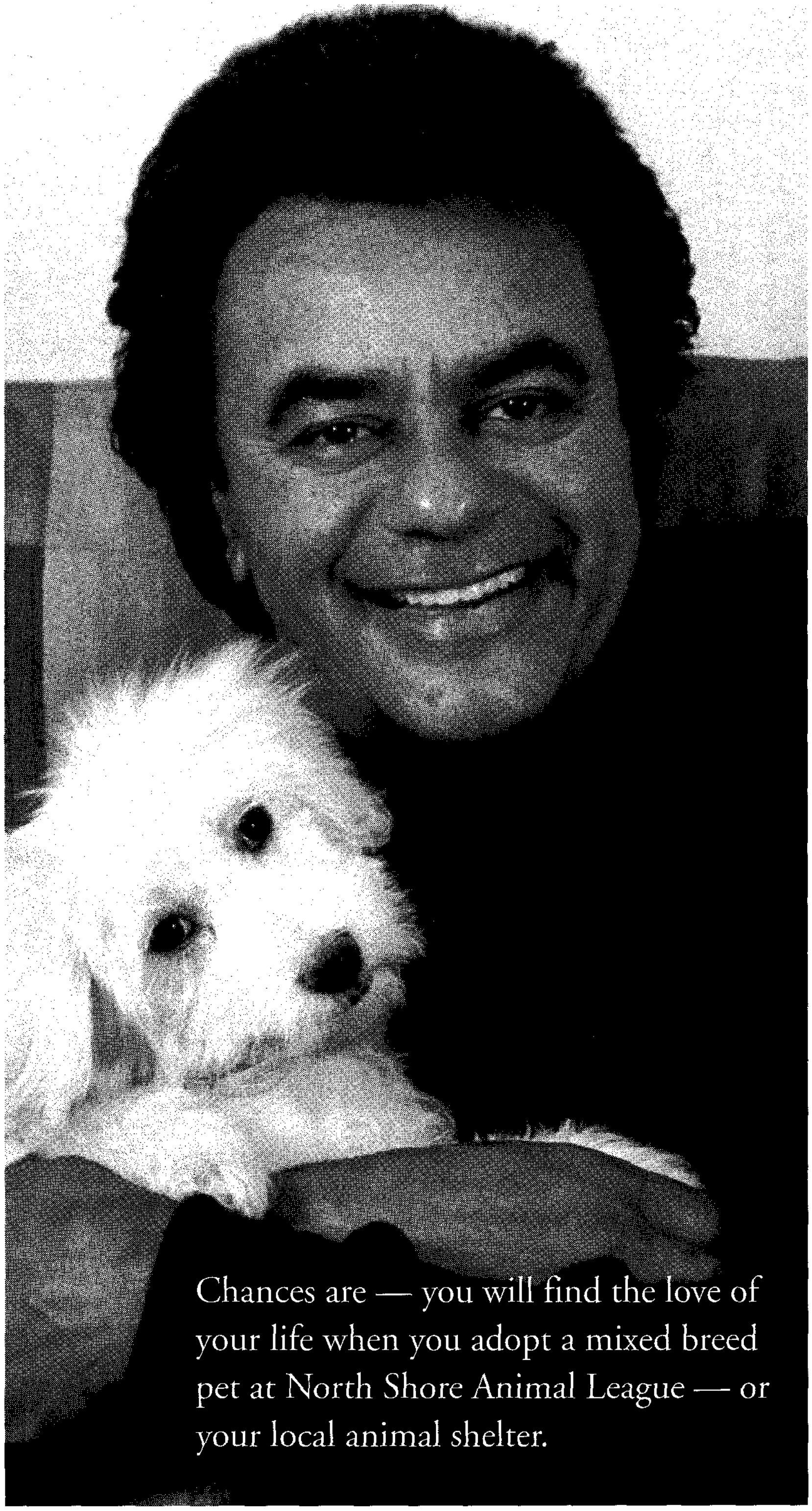
Chances are — you will find the love of your life when you adopt a mixed breed pet at North Shore Animal League — or your local animal shelter.

Photo by Mary Bloom

Johnny Mathis and 8-week old "Mimi".

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comes, the watercress crunches and the pork is tender. No steam-tabled soup could offer this. If you didn't know that lo mein should crunch, that each noodle should spring separately and sprightly round a fork, it will be like tasting these noodles for the first time. Fried rice is sharp and tangy, with a shower of salty little fish that make it worthy of a main course.

Everything at Natural tastes made-to-order. When we ask what spices coat the fried sea scallops that are so light and sweet, Jackie replies, "Salt, pepper, and special things." Then his wife gives him a come-clean-with-it look, and he sheepishly recants, "It's just salt and pepper. It's all in the timing." Henny Youngman wasn't this on-the-money.

Pork chops in a Peking-style barbecue sauce are scrumptious. Beef with mixed vegetables comes out a little muddy and hard to eat. The beef in the West Lake soup appears much leaner. The ubiquitous black-bean sauce undergoes a change in proportion at Natural and becomes lighter and cleaner.

Natural's bland dining room is dominated by four blue fish tanks from which you can select your crab, big-mouth bass, shrimp, or eel. Estiatorio Milos in midtown makes a big deal about fish on ice, 30 bucks a pound. Jackie will bring over your selection still flapping in a plastic bucket for approval. Not exactly elegant, but his cooking of it is worthy of Limoges, for one third the price of what you're getting grilled for uptown. The belly is steamed in a broth of scallions, garlic, oil, and ginger and is sublimely sweet and juicy. The rest is cleanly fried in peanut oil with salt and pepper and goes down like caviar on New Year's Eve. Butterflied shrimp are lickably crunchy, shell and all, with a dipping sauce of soy, seaweed, and peanut oil. Eel is light and bouncy, resting on snappy bok choy; lobster can get overwhelmed by garlic; and crabs are a mess in fiery hot sauce (though they're worth getting sloppy for).

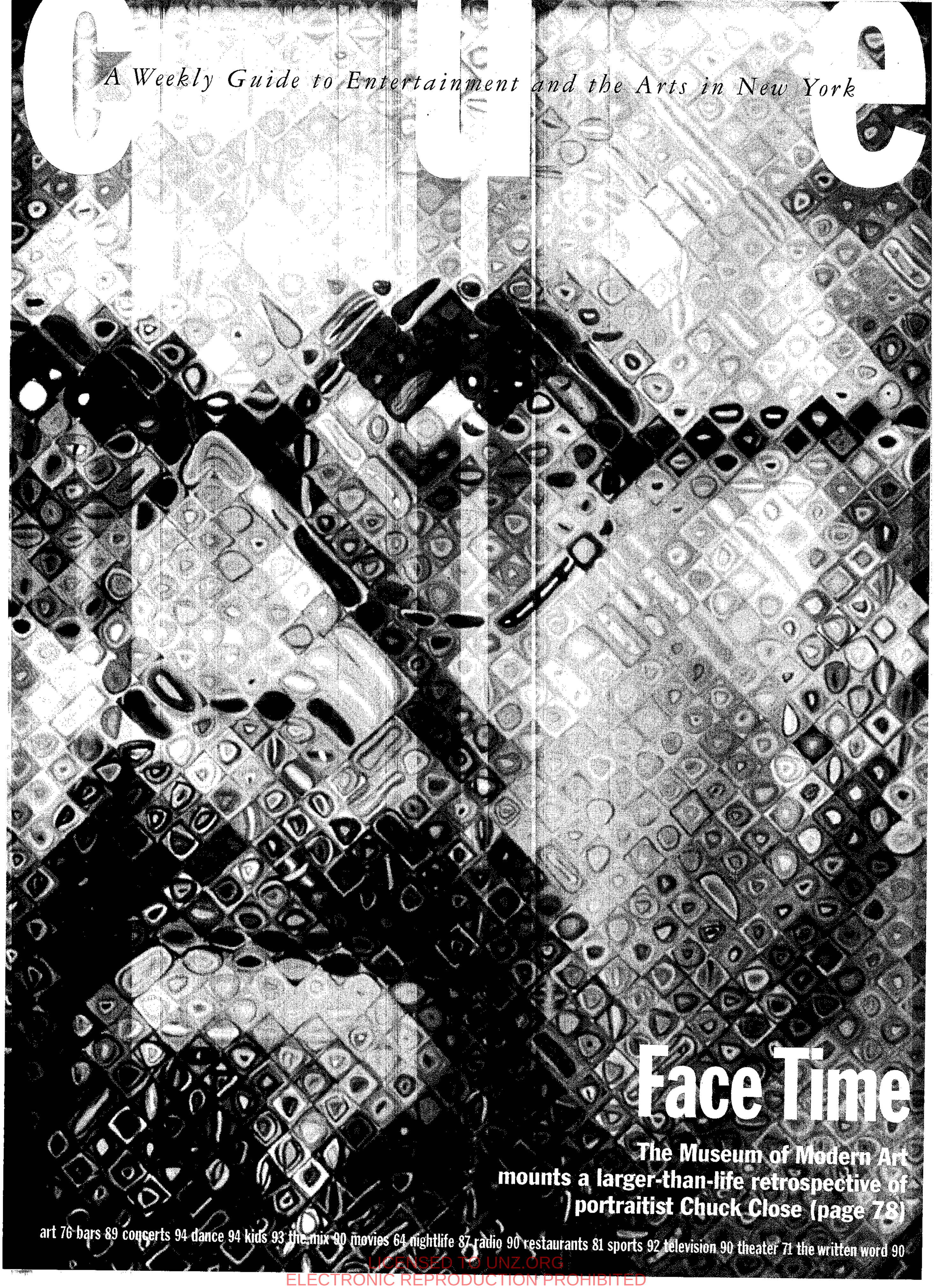
Jackie even offers ostrich. "Tastes like chicken, yes?" Yes, but he is so thrilled to serve it that you can't deny him. He and the whole Ma family have earned your compliance, for joyously invigorating the integrity of a cuisine that was sinking to the bottom of Lake Tung Ting. For that, they have my gratitude. And I have their leftovers. The best part is, they don't pack them in those nasty white containers. "Cardboard is no good. Get all soggy," says Jackie. I hope you make a fortune, cookie.

Shun Lee Palace, 155 East 55th Street (371-8844). Open Mon.–Sat., noon–11:30 P.M., Sundays till 11. Appetizers $3–$14, entrées $13–$38. All major credit cards.

Natural Restaurant, 88 Allen Street (966-1321). Open daily 10 A.M.–10 P.M. Appetizers $1–$5, entrées $6–$13. Cash only. ▬

Cue

A Weekly Guide to Entertainment and the Arts in New York



Face Time

The Museum of Modern Art mounts a larger-than-life retrospective of portraitist Chuck Close (page 78)

art 76 bars 89 concerts 94 dance 94 kids 93 the mix 90 movies 64 nightlife 87 radio 90 restaurants 81 sports 92 television 90 theater 71 the written word 90

movies

The Real Blonde...Rashomon...Dark City

Photograph courtesy of the Symphony Space

Festival Of Great Import

You may be scratching your head over the exclusion of 'Ma Vie en Rose' from this year's Oscar nominees, but you can still catch some foreign favorites at "50 Years of Foreign Film and the Academy Awards," a selection of 25 Oscar-winning and -nominated movies from abroad (like 1988's 'Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown,' above). Screenings start February 24 at Symphony Space. See "Museums, Societies, Etc." for more info.

New Films

Afterglow—Two marriages hit the skids, and, seeking comfort, the unhappy spouses unknowingly swap partners. With Nick Nolte, Julie Christie, Lara Flynn Boyle, and Jonny Lee Miller. (1 hr. 53 mins.; R) *Regency.*

★**Amistad**—Steven Spielberg has made a stiff but powerful film about an actual revolt aboard a slave ship in 1839 and the constitutional struggle that followed in its wake. The best thing in the movie is very violent indeed, though it's not the revolt itself, which appears right at the beginning of *Amistad*. The Africans slaughter most of the crew, ordering the two Spanish survivors to take them back to Africa. But the Spaniards trick them and steer the *Amistad* north, and the ship is finally intercepted off the coast of Connecticut by the American Navy. Put on trial for murder and piracy, the Africans are defended by abolitionists, who hire a real-estate lawyer, Roger Baldwin (Matthew McConaughey), to try the case. The question arises: Were they born as slaves—on a plantation, say, in the West Indies—or as free men in Africa? Silent until then, Cinque (Djimon Hounsou) finally speaks (through a translator) and recounts the entire tale: The Africans, mostly from the Mende tribe, were kidnapped by rival tribesmen, kept in a slave fortress off the coast of Sierra Leone, and then taken across the ocean in an illegal Portuguese slaver, the *Tecora*. As Cinque speaks, we see it at last—the voyage, the excruciating transit in the cargo hold known in accounts of the slave trade as "the middle passage." Spielberg stages these scenes with a power that perhaps he alone in film history is capable of. The filmmakers' point of view is that the *Amistad* incident was a central way station between the imperfectly executed Declaration of Independence and the inevitable Civil War. Many of the players are conscious of the significance of the moment. The opportunistic, cunning President Martin Van Buren (Nigel Hawthorne), afraid of losing the South in the coming election, wants the Africans returned as property to Queen Isabella of Spain. The abolitionists, both white (Stellan Skarsgård) and black (Morgan Freeman), see the *Amistad* affair as Armageddon in the New World—the trial of Christian faith, of humanity's right to be saved. Just when *Amistad* is about to perish from nobility, Anthony Hopkins, as John Quincy Adams, saves the day. There are, I suppose, less sensational ways of doing this material, but Spielberg's way is astonishing, and the shock for us lies both in the images themselves and in the realization that we have never really seen this primal American story. By contrast, the comparable passages in *Roots* are no more than genteel. (Denby; 12/15/97) (2 hrs. 30 mins.; R) *Embassy 2–3; 84th Street; New Coliseum.*

★**The Apostle**—This is the best movie ever made about a man of God—which is to say, the most honest and morally the most ambiguous. Robert Duvall plays Sonny, a Texan Pentecostal preacher, and he's completely on top of what he's doing. One night Sonny has a vision: His wife (Farrah Fawcett, who is perfectly good) is sleeping with a handsome young minister. He returns home in a drunken rage, and, with half the town watching, takes a baseball bat to the minister's head. Sonny has to disappear fast, and after deep-sixing his car, he hits the road and emerges as a newborn itinerant man of God. He settles into a bedraggled but pleasant Louisiana town, where, identifying himself as "E.F., The Apostle," he joins forces with a retired black minister and builds a congregation from the ground up. The movie sags a bit as Duvall romances Miranda Richardson, who plays a genteel southern lady both attracted to and repelled by the dynamic preacher. Still, *The Apostle* gets at something authentic and challenging—the insistent goodness of a man never free of dishonesty or sin. Sonny is too much a sinner simply to possess God. He remains an eternal suppliant, a candidate for blessedness, and therefore, despite everything, a hero. (Denby; 1/12/98) (About 1 hr. 50 mins.; NR) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; Pavilion Theatre.*

★**As Good As It Gets**—In James L. Brooks's new picture, Helen Hunt plays Carol, a straight-talking single mother obsessed with the care of her severely asthmatic young son. Carol has neglected herself, and she falls into the one thing in the world that she needs least—a relationship with a matchlessly rude writer, Melvin (Jack Nicholson), who suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder. Ferociously intelligent but mad as a hatter, Melvin needs two bars of soap to wash his hands and hates to be touched or even spoken to. Melvin torments his neighbor in Manhattan—a gay artist (Greg Kinnear)—but the movie, as we can tell early on, is a Scrooge story. The question is not when Melvin will melt but how. A superbly written and acted tearjerker. (Denby; 12/22–29/97) (2 hrs. 13 mins.; PG-13) *Village East; 19th Street East; Murray Hill Cinemas; Criterion Center; Gemini; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; Metro Cinema; Kingsway; The Movies at Bayside.*

Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life—A documentary of the life and times of the best-selling author and objectivist philosopher. Written and directed by Michael Paxton; narrated by Sharon Gless. (2 hrs. 21 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

Blues Brothers 2000—Dan Aykroyd returns with a new crew—John Goodman, Joe Morton, and J. Evan Bonifant—and more celebrities, including Aretha, Steve Lawrence, Erykah Badu, and the late Junior Wells. Directed by John Landis. (2 hrs. 4 mins.; PG-13) *Chelsea; Criterion Center.*

★**Boogie Nights**—It's the disco-and-cocaine period of bell-bottom L.A. and a small group of porn actors, filmmakers, and hangers-on gathered under the wing of Jack Horner (Burt Reynolds), an avuncular producer who likes to have people hang out at his house. Horner takes one look at Eddie Adams (Mark Wahlberg), a busboy in a Valley club, and decides that Eddie has got the stuff. Mark Wahlberg may have something in his pants, but there's no gleam in his eye. What Wahlberg does best is convey Eddie's desperation. In Wahlberg's scenes with Julianne Moore—who plays Amber Waves, a female porn star—Moore does most of the work. Moore, a great actress, has red, red lips and lambent flesh, yet her eyes are anxious; she's a kind of neurotic siren, always available but frantically unhappy. *Boogie Nights* is made up of many vignettes, and while Anderson is a good observer, he hasn't really shaped the screenplay. The movie has its giddy moments, but in the end it is peculiarly depressing. (Denby; 10/20/97) (2 hrs. 37 mins.; R) *Eastside Playhouse.*

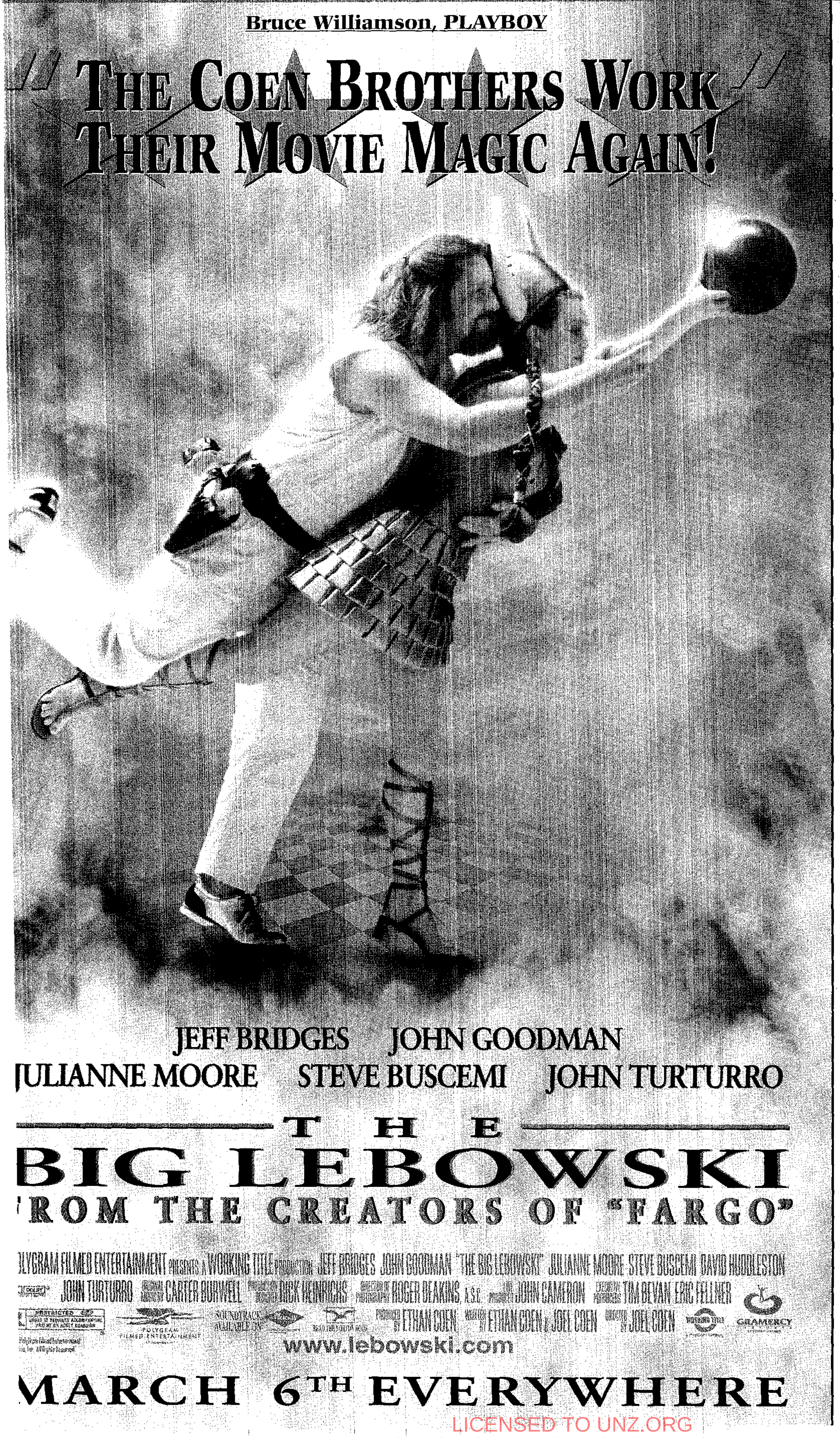
The Borrowers—John Goodman stars in the film version of the famous series of books about a miniature family. (1 hr. 30 mins.; G) *Village East; Chelsea;*

Ground Rules:

These brief reviews, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by David Denby...A ★ denotes a current release that *New York* recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element...Reviews are followed by the Manhattan theaters where the film is playing.

'Cue' cover photograph by Ellen Page Wilson, courtesy of the PaceWildenstein Gallery.

SPECIAL ADVANCE SCREENING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84th Street; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas.

★**The Boxer**—Just as the Irish troubles seem to have gone on forever, movies about the Irish Troubles have also gone on a bit, and so I may, perhaps, escape censure if I merely salute *The Boxer* in passing as yet another forceful, honestly made drama about Belfast, fanaticism, explosions, and the blue-gray light of desperate hope. Like *In the Name of the Father*, this picture was written by Terry George and directed and co-written by Jim Sheridan, and it's about an IRA man, Danny Flynn (Daniel Day-Lewis), who comes out of prison after fourteen years and no longer feels hatred for anyone. Danny wants to get back into the ring, where he was once a promising Irish fighter. He likes the discipline of training, and after so many years of numbing self-suppression, he actually needs to feel the pain of being hit. Day-Lewis brings to the role his usual rapt physical and mental absorption in what he is doing. Silent and wary much of the time, with hawklike eyes and a closed-off face, he bursts out, now and then, in tirades of memorable bitterness. The movie's acts of violence and betrayal may be familiar, but the filmmakers' obvious contempt for people given over to fanaticism is enormously welcome—a call for the most elementary kind of sanity. Even in the smallest roles, the acting is exceptionally strong. As long as such English and Irish powerhouses as Emily Watson, Brian Cox, Gerald McSorley, and Ken Stott are ready to make these movies, they will continue to be made. (Denby; 1/12/98) (1 hr. 47 mins.; R) *Waverly; 59th Street East.*

The Break—Stephen Rea is an I.R.A. man trying to start over in New York, where he falls in with a group of Guatemalan freedom fighters. (2 hrs.; R) *Quad Cinema.*

Comrades, Almost a Love Story—The story of two loners from mainland China who chase their dreams and each other to Manhattan. Hong Kong's 1997 movie of the year. Starring Leon Lai and Maggie Cheung. Directed by Peter Chan. (1 hr. 45 mins.; NR) *Cinema Village 12th St.*

Dangerous Beauty—Katherine McCormack is a sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan who uses her brain to trade beauty for power. Also starring Rufus Sewell and Fred Ward. Directed by *thirtysomething*'s Marshall Herskovitz. (2 hrs.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Gemini; Lincoln Square.*

Dark City—A man discovers his memories aren't his own and fights to discover reality. WIth Kiefer Sutherland, Rufus Sewell, Jennifer Connelly, and William Hurt. Directed by Alex Proyas. (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *Opens Friday.*

Deconstructing Harry—There are some excruciatingly funny moments in Woody Allen's new movie, but scandalously entertaining as parts of it are, the picture still left me in the foulest of foul moods. Ostensibly, it's about a selfish writer, Harry Block (Woody Allen), who travels to his alma mater in order to accept an honorary degree. Harry is at an impasse in both his creative and his personal life, and as he tries to get someone to accompany him on his trip, various women show up and tear into him—he has cheated on them, he has used their experiences with him in his novels and stories, he's a shit, a twerp, a betrayer, and so on. Woody Allen stages the fictional version of various marital events, drawn from Harry's books, and then he shows us the people that the fictions are based on—often very different from the originals. Harry may be an utter dog, but he attracts and disappoints one beautiful young woman after another—and what could be a greater ego blast than that kind of "self-criticism"? It's getting a little creepy to watch a short, pale 61-year-old man kissing (in one movie) Elisabeth Shue, Judy Davis, Hazelle Goodman, Amy Irving, Kirstie Alley, etc., etc. I have nothing against egocentricity, but Allen doesn't seem to realize that he's left the impression that women are drawn to Harry only because his creator is a famous movie director. (Denby; 12/22–29/97) (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) *The Screening Room; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; Main Street Cinemas.*

Desperate Measures—Andy Garcia is a police officer with a son who needs a donor transplant, and the perfect match is a convicted multiple murderer. (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) *Criterion Center.*

Fallen—Denzel Washington stars as a detective who put away a demonic serial killer, only to find that there's an evil copycat on the loose. (2 hrs.; R) *Criterion Center.*

Fallen Angels—Wong Kar-Wai's latest frantic fantasy, about a hitman who's ready to wind things down and the two women who keep him in the game. (1 hr. 36 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

The Full Monty—Robert Carlyle stars as Gaz, an out-of-work steelworker in Sheffield, England, who rounds up his unemployed friends and persuades them to put together a male strip troupe. Directed by Peter Cattaneo. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Art Greenwich Twin; Sutton; The Movies at Bayside.*

The Gingerbread Man—Shakespearean actor Kenneth Branagh plays a Savannah attorney (a drawling Famke Janssen plays his ex-wife) who gets involved with a trashy waitress (Embeth Davidtz) and her crazy old man (Robert Duvall). Story by John Grisham; directed by Robert Altman. (1 hr. 55 mins.; R) *Chelsea; Coronet; Lincoln Square.*

★**Good Will Hunting**—Mopping up at M.I.T., Will Hunting (Matt Damon) casually solves problems left on the blackboards, problems intended to stump the best mathematical minds in America. The formidable Professor Lambeau (Stellan Skarsgård), recognizing Will's uncanny talent, takes the boy under his wing, keeping him out of jail by agreeing to get him into therapy. Will lands in the office of Lambeau's old friend and rival Sean McGuire (Robin Williams), a bit of a screw-up himself but perhaps the one shrink in Boston who can understand Will. The boy doesn't want to be "saved." He wants to be left alone. People turn themselves inside out trying to help him, but he repels them all. This movie has wit and temperament to burn—there isn't a dead scene in it anywhere. In the end, however, the script takes a disastrous turn toward conventionality. What I will always remember is an edge of temper. The film persuades us that genius is of incalculable worth but utter hell to live with. (Denby; 12/8/97) (2 hrs. 5 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Chelsea West; Murray Hill Cinemas; New York Twin; UA East; Lincoln Square; Pavilion Theatre; Movieworld.*

Great Expectations—A modern-day twist on the Dickens tale, with Ethan Hawke as a poor artist and fisherman whose mysterious benefactor sets him up as SoHo's newest hot talent. Gwyneth Paltrow is the pretty girl he's known and loved forever—though, given her pervasive unpleasantness, it's not clear why. Directed by Alfonso Cuaron. (1 hr. 50 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; 34th Street Showplace; Chelsea; Coronet; Ziegfeld; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; Olympia Theatre; Kingsway; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

Hurricane Streets—A young East Village boy tries to get off the juvenile-delinquent track he's on. Winner of three Sundance awards. Directed by Morgan J. Freeman. (1 hr. 28 mins.; R) *Village East; 19th Street East; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Lincoln Square.*

I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me—A twentysomething virgin tries to understand the reality of today's dating world. The directorial debut of Julie Davis. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Waverly; First & 62nd St. Cinema; 62nd and Broadway; Metro Cinema.*

The Ice Storm—It's the early seventies and two families are falling apart. The husband and father (Kevin Kline) in one of these families, the Hoods, is having a tepid affair with Janey Carver, the wife and mother (Sigourney Weaver) in the other. At the same time, Hood's 14-year-old daughter, Wendy (Christina Ricci), who likes to expose herself, is fooling around with Janey's two sons (Elijah Wood and Adam Hann-Byrd). Paul Hood, Ben's 16-year-old son, is the narrator. For a while, we hope the film will be funny. But perceptive as it is, the film feels pained and embarrassed. These people are just pathetic; they behave badly, and they don't even get any fun out of it. Director Ang Lee's touch is very delicate, and the movie's perfection of bleakness offers a refined pleasure (of a sort). But the material doesn't quite play. (Denby; 10/6/97) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) *Worldwide Cinemas.*

Talent

Blonde Ambition

Like a good man should, independent filmmaker Tom DiCillo is defending the honor of a woman: Elizabeth Berkley, the actress of *Showgirls* infamy, who appears in DiCillo's latest film, *The Real Blonde*. "I place more blame on the idiot who directed *Showgirls*, the idiot who wrote it, and the biggest blame on the idiot who green-lit the project," he harrumphs. "All she did was try to act in it." DiCillo is happy to champion an ambitious underdog, having been one himself. He's the director who spent five years and five false starts getting his very personal *Box of Moonlight* to the screen—where it won critical praise but only a tiny audience. With *The Real Blonde* (opening Friday, February 27), the man behind the blood, sweat, and low budgets of *Johnny Suede* and *Living in Oblivion* is now taking aim at the shallow lives of image-conscious urbanites. "I really wanted to focus on the idea of artifice," DiCillo says, "and this glittering tinsel that exists in our society today that everybody seems hypnotized by." The 43-year-old director thought of the title (his metaphor for artificial, unattainable perfection) before he wrote a word of the screenplay. Joe (played by Matthew Modine) is a 35-year-old actor who refuses to audition for anything low-brow or commercial and consequently never works. His friend Bob, though, makes big bucks on a soap opera and spends his time chasing a succession of "real blondes." Bob's glamorous life has its allure, and Joe is increasingly torn: Yield to a world obsessed with illusion and hook up with his own real blonde (played charmingly by Berkley) or stay true to himself and his girlfriend (Catherine Keener). The film is a knowing look at an average guy, but DiCillo admits he's never faced Joe's exact struggle. "My wife," he laughs, "is a beautiful brunette."

Patricia Falvo

Director Tom DiCillo on the set of *The Real Blonde.*

The Jackal—Bruce Willis is a killer for hire and Richard Gere an Irish terrorist with a good heart who tries to stop him from shooting someone very, very important. A master of disguises, Willis wears a variety of bizarre outfits and mustaches, and in one sequence, eager to pick up a gay man in a bar, he dons a blondined wig that makes him look rather cute. These sudden shifts in apparel—Willis might be a guest on an old TV variety show—are about the only amusement in a pedestrian thriller that does everything by rote. (Denby; 11/24/97) (1 hr. 23 mins.; R) *Worldwide Cinemas.*

Jackie Brown—Quentin Tarantino has written some scandalously funny lines for Samuel L. Jackson, who plays one Ordell Robbie, an egotistical L.A. gun seller. Ordell keeps a number of people in his employ, including a libidinous white surfer girl (Bridget Fonda); a mangy ex-con (Robert De Niro); and a stewardess, Jackie Brown (Pam Grier), who carries cash for Ordell back and forth between Los Angeles and Mexico. The movie is about Jackie's attempt to break free of Ordell and fleece him of his money. The picture is actually an elongated and ambitious B movie—a dogged homage to the kind of atmospheric minor crime picture that Tarantino, having grown up in a video store, enjoys more than he does prestige movies. He has built the movie around Pam Grier, the strapping, bodice-spilling star of early-seventies black exploitation movies, yet she's a limited performer, and she can't really bloom in the realistic, matter-of-fact framework that Tarantino has constructed for her. Most of the time, Tarantino pairs her with another B-movie actor, the somber, stone-faced Robert Forster. When Forster acts with Grier we realize what Tarantino is getting at. These two actors, sitting across a table in some dim bar, don't open anything up; they're not particularly expressive. Perhaps Tarantino is saying that this is what people in the crime world are really like—sly, mean, and limited. The plot is enormously complicated and never speeds up. At the climax, in fact, it slows down: Tarantino shows us the same sequence of events three times consecutively, each time from the point of view of a different character. After the formal bravura of *Pulp Fiction*, it's as if he were saying, "Look, no tricks; everything is exactly as it seems." So it may turn out that Quentin Tarantino is not, after all, the American Godard, not a mall-rat pop genius eager to transform pulp into formally demanding art. He really likes pulp for its stiff, repetitive, bullheaded qualities. He likes it so much, he's made his own sober version of it. (Denby; 1/5/98) (2 hrs. 34 mins.; R) *Embassy 2–3.*

Krippendorf's Tribe—Richard Dreyfuss is an anthropologist who fakes evidence of a "lost tribe" by rounding up his kids, painting them with dark paint, and filming them in his backyard. With Jenna Elfman and Lili Tomlin. Directed by Todd Holland. (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG-13) *Starts Friday.*

Kundun—Unlike the fatuous, conventional *Seven Years in Tibet*, this movie has been made with love. It has an assured beauty and an exquisite formality that honor the subject. And yet, lovely as it is, *Kundun* is of very little dramatic interest—it's an extremely beautiful, boring movie. A boy grows into a gracious and modest young man, a man not always sure that he's up to the role of leader; but still, he has no great spiritual crisis, no awful time of testing, and everyone in Lhasa gathers around and tutors and protects him. Approaching an alien tradition, Scorsese is entirely respectful, and the respectfulness dulls out the movie. I can't escape the feeling that Buddhism is an impossible subject for the movies. After all, great movie characters are men of overbearing will—Charles Foster Kane, or Vito and Michael Corleone, or Scorsese's Jake La Motta—not characters who renounce will. (Denby; 1/5/98) (1 hr. 53 mins.; PG) *Village East; Guild 50th Street; Kingsway.*

Leather Jacket Love Story—An erotic gay comedy about a love affair between a valley boy and a biker. Starring Sean Tataryn and Christopher Bradley. (1 hr. 40 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

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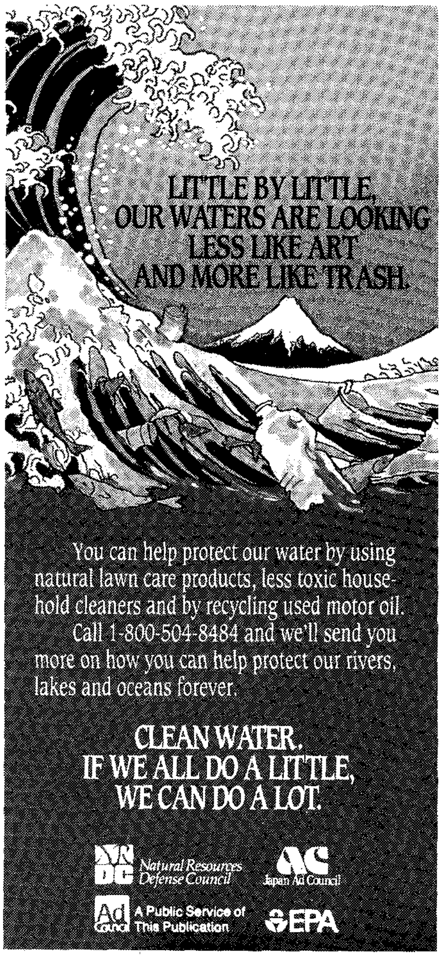
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Almodóvar since that Iberian screwball classic *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*. The story, which has been freely adapted from a Ruth Rendell novel, teases symmetry into an Almodóvarian pretzel. Eager to become the world's greatest lover, our hero Victor (Liberto Rabal) sleeps with the wives of the two Madrid policemen who once put him in jail—first Clara (the great Angela Molina, of the tragic mask), who is much adored by her obsessive husband, Sancho (Pepe Sancho). Taking Victor in hand, she teaches him some of the more essential points of lovemaking, and under Clara's tutelage, he becomes a saner and gentler fellow—a better man, in every sense. Bored with Clara, Victor pursues the exquisite Elena (Francesca Neri), the woman who lured him into trouble some years earlier. It was at Elena's house that the 20-year-old Victor accidentally shot Sancho's partner, a promising young police detective named David (Javier Bardem). After the shooting, Elena, a rich girl dabbling in drugs, was so guilty over her own role in the affair that she married David, who is now confined to a wheelchair. He's a thoroughly virile man in every sense but the literal one. So the adulterous joining of Victor and Elena is charged with the many varieties of desire, guilt, and ambivalence. It's a scene worth waiting for—certainly the most sensual of Almodóvar's heterosexual love scenes. For Almodóvar, sexual passion is part of the cruel joke of Spanish guilt and fatalism. Sex is a matter of life and death that drives people into absurd situations; Almodóvar's most tragic scenes slide into farce (and vice versa). Despite his erotic fixations, Pedro Almodóvar is the cinema's last true innocent. (Denby; 1/26/98) (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Love Walked In—Denis Leary is a lounge pianist who uses his own pretty wife (Aitana Sanchez Gijon) to set up a wealthy patron as an adulterer. With Terence Stamp. Directed by Juan J. Campanella. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Village East; 19th Street East.*

Ma Vie en Rose—The incredibly appealing story of a little boy who thinks he's a little girl and the emotional upheavals this stubborn belief creates among his family and neighbors. Winner of a 1996 César award. (1 hr. 28 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Moon Over Broadway—A documentary of the making of Carol Burnett's Broadway comedy, *Moon Over Buffalo*. Created by D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. (1 hr. 38 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

★**Mrs. Dalloway**—In this accomplished but slightly tedious adaptation of Virginia Woolf's great novel, Vanessa Redgrave is Clarissa Dalloway, a prosperous woman—married to a member of parliament—who is preparing for her annual party. In the hours before the party, Mrs. Dalloway reviews her life, casting back 30 years to easy summer days at her family's country estate, where, as a young woman, she rejected a demanding, puppyish suitor, Peter Walsh, in favor of the more stable and successful Richard Dalloway. Did she marry the right man? *Mrs. Dalloway* is at its most inventive, and most Woolfian, when Redgrave is front and center, behaving with elaborate social grace and thinking very different things to herself. Just hearing Redgrave pronounce the word "dis-ahs-ter" (her appraisal of her own party) is reason enough to see the movie. In any case, I can't imagine any other actress large enough (in every sense) to hold together this plotless story. Redgrave makes the heroine all of a piece—timid, conventional, but alive to every breeze of consciousness. (Denby; 2/23/98) (1 hr. 37 mins.; PG-13) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Nil by Mouth—Gary Oldman wrote and directed this story of the grim realities of today's working class in England. Starring Kathy Burke and Ray Winstone. (2 hrs. 8 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center.*

Palmetto—Fresh out of prison, Woody Harrelson returns to his seaside Florida town and gets back into trouble. Lured, mostly, by Elisabeth Shue and Chloe Sevigny. Also starring Gina Gershon and Michael Rapaport. (2 hrs.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; Murray Hill Cinemas; Criterion Center; Gemini; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Movieworld.*

Rashomon—Akira Kurosawa's 1951 story of a rape, a murder, and the unknowability of truth in twelfth-century Kyoto. Starring Toshiro Mifune and Machiko Kyo. (1 hr. 28 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday at Film Forum.*

The Replacement Killers—Chow Yun-Fat is an assassin whose desire to leave the business gets him into trouble with the mob; Mira Sorvino is the petty criminal who guides him out of trouble. Directed by Antoine Fuqua. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; Centre Sunnyside.*

Senseless—Marlon Wayans is a workaholic who competes with David Spade for a $60,000-a-year analyst's job. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Village East; 19th Street East; 86th Street; 84th Street; Nova; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

Shock Corridor—Samuel Fuller's 1963 hallucinatory story of a reporter who gets his sister to say he molested her so that he can be committed to an insane asylum that he's trying to investigate. With Constance Towers and Peter Breck. (1 hr. 41 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

Sphere—Dustin Hoffman, Samuel L. Jackson, and Sharon Stone are part of a group of scientists summoned by the government to explore a spacecraft that has been on the ocean floor for almost 300 years. Also starring Peter Coyote and Liev Schreiber. Barry Levinson directs the adaptation of Michael Crichton's thriller. (About 2 hrs.; R) *Village East; 34th Street Showplace; Chelsea West; 72nd St. East; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; New Coliseum; Nova; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld; Plaza .*

Spice World—The U.K.'s Spice Girls tool around London. (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG) *Movieworld.*

★**The Sweet Hereafter**—Atom Egoyan's film is a rarity. Adapted from Russell Banks's 1991 novel devoted to the aftermath of a devastating school-bus accident, the film appears to be a kind of detective story. A big-city lawyer, Mitchell Stephens (Ian Holm), enters a snowy, forlorn town in British Columbia after fourteen children have died and travels about interviewing the parents and survivors, desperate to enlist everyone, including the teenage survivor, Nicole (Sarah Polley), in a grievance suit. As Stephens investigates, we see what led up to the accident—the family life of the town, with its fissures and its secrets, including adultery and a suggestion of incest—and eventually we see the accident itself. The film cuts backward and forward in time, and we expect that Stephens will uncover some amazing circumstance that will explain everything. We experience the accident through the eyes of Billy (Bruce Greenwood), who is driving behind the bus and is the father of two of the children. Billy sees; he's the hero of the movie, an unillusioned man, rejecting avenging lawyers and bad-luck omens in favor of the most bitter reality. His adulterous scenes with Alberta Watson (the mother in David O. Russell's *Spanking the Monkey*) have an acrid intimacy. The actors are all excellent in a plain style that avoids irony, pose, perversity. By the end of the movie, everything comes together—the answer to the detective inquiry is all that is most difficult to face in life. If there were many movies as reality-bound as this one, I think I would go mad. That this one exists, however, is almost a blessing. (Denby; 11/24/97) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) *Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

★**Titanic**—Writer-director James Cameron has pulled it off. This fabulously expensive watery epic is actually a very good movie. *Titanic* begins with a treasure hunter, Brock Lovett (Bill Paxton), who is obsessed with the sunken hulk. Lovett's submersible robot enters one of the deluxe staterooms to retrieve not the famous diamond he was looking for but only a drawing of a naked young woman wearing the stone. It turns out that the woman, Rose, is still alive; she's an articulate 100-year-old beauty (Gloria Stuart) who joins Lovett at his ship and then holds him and his crew of techno-ruffians in thrall with her story of what happened. Back in 1912, the 17-year-old Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslet) boards the ship in utter misery. Rose is accompanied by her awful fiancé, Cal Hockley (Billy Zane), a domineering steel baron from Pittsburgh, and her snobbish mother (Frances Fisher). Onboard, Rose meets her soul mate, Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio). A gambler, Jack has the wit to see that Rose's unhappiness hides a bold, deeply romantic and sexual nature. Except for the crude, good-hearted Denver millionairess Molly Brown (Kathy Bates), the wealthy are unspeakably rude or just frightened and starchy. Jack, the interloper, takes Rose down to steerage, where the real people are having themselves a fine time drinking and dancing up a storm. This sort of cheesy stuff is redeemed only by the romantic charge between Winslet and DiCaprio. The sinking is lovely—detailed, agonizingly slow at first and then rushed and panicky and grandly gruesome at the end. As Jack and Rose hang at the railing, people lose their grip and go crashing down the deck or fall from the heights into the water. After the ship goes under, Cameron has his finest, cruelest moment—the survivors left in the vast expanse of freezing water wailing in confusion. As for Rose, she is delivered into an active and brilliant life. The ship may be ponderous, but Cameron's conception stays light in the water. (Denby; 12/22–29/97) (3 hrs. 17 mins.; PG-13) *Village Theatre VII; 34th Street Showplace; Chelsea; Astor Plaza; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; New Coliseum; Nova; Olympia Theatre; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld; Plaza ; The Movies at Bayside.*

Tomorrow Never Dies—The first hour or so is laced with the usual satisfying sexual innuendo and insolent humor. Pierce Brosnan, of course, will never possess Sean Connery's aura of menace—Brosnan is Bond lite ("Bond . . . Jim Bond")—but Jonathan Pryce is self-amused and amusing as a Rupert Murdoch–like media entrepreneur who foments a war between Britain and China. There is a fine BMW 750IL that can be driven by remote control (i.e., from the backseat), but much of the action—explosions, more explosions, men firing at one another with machine guns—is just as boring as the action in ten other big movies of the past year. You won't miss a thing should you leave well before the end. If more can't be found in Bond than this, I wouldn't object, in principle, to that tuxedo's being hung up in the closet for good. (Denby; 1/12/98) (2 hrs.; PG-13) *Criterion Center.*

Village of Dreams—Two boys grow up in the Japanese countryside after WWII. Directed by Yoichi Higashi. (1 hr. 52 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

★**Wag the Dog**—Barry Levinson's political and media satire goes as fast as the wind, and that's a relief because the idea behind the movie is thin. Very thin—and at times offensively glib. So if Levinson had directed with a heavy hand, or paused for more than an instant's reflection, he would have killed the nasty fun. It's less than two weeks before an election, and the president, seeking another term, is accused of molesting a teenage girl just outside the Oval Office. That the allegation may be false is not the point; the Washington *Post* is about to run the story. What to do? The president's operative Winifred Ames (Anne Heche) calls in a Dick Morris–like Mr. Fixit, Conrad Brean (Robert De Niro), and Brean, together with a big-deal Hollywood producer, Stanley Motss (Dustin Hoffman), distracts the press and the public. They whip up a nonexistent war with mighty Albania, complete with sinister Albanian terrorists crossing the Canadian border carrying a nuke in a suitcase. I have to say that *Wag the Dog* is accomplished and at times viciously funny. Levinson, shooting very fast and cheaply, creates a likable, low-key world of rogues and scoundrels working together to gull the public; we enjoy their company, we enjoy the pretense that political and media life is like this—fast, wisecracking, devastatingly effective. The picture conveys an irresistible pleasure in fakery for its own sake, and that's its charm. (Denby; 1/19/98) (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; 19th Street East; Murray Hill Cinemas; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square.*

The Wedding Singer—Adam Sandler is an eighties-era musician reluctantly playing the wedding circuit who falls in love with the already-engaged

Drew Barrymore. With Christine Taylor and Alexis Arquette. (1 hr. 35 mins.; PG-13) *Village East; 19th Street East; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Criterion Center; 86th Street; Lincoln Square; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld.*

★**The Wings of the Dove**—Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter), clever, beautiful, and distinguished, lives in London with her wealthy aunt (Charlotte Rampling), who is determined to marry her off to a rich man and who does what she can to break up Kate's relationship with the charming but penurious young journalist Merton Densher (Linus Roache). By degrees, and without his quite understanding it, Densher gets pulled into a conspiracy that Kate engineers. For there is another young person in their social circle; the fabulously wealthy American heiress Millie Theale (Alison Elliott), who is sweet, generous, and wasting away from some nameless disease. Millie needs a lover; she needs to live. Kate, who genuinely likes her, wants Millie to be happy and to know love—with Densher, who would then inherit the money, after Millie's death, that would allow Kate to marry him. The complicating factor—Henry James always has a complicating factor—is that Densher falls for Millie; or rather, he falls for her desire to experience everything she can before dying. The filmmakers have aggressively bumped the period ahead from 1902 to 1910; the characters take the subway, smoke cigarettes furiously, and attend a gallery exhibit of Klimt's decadent nudes. We get the point: Kate Croy and Merton Densher are modern personalities, rebels against the constrictions of their time. Rebellion is certainly not something that Henry James had in mind, but it's a minor vulgarization. (Denby; 11/10/97) (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *Beekman; Lincoln Square; Pavilion Theatre.*

Zero Effect—Bill Pullman and Ben Stiller star as a private detective and a lawyer who try to trip up a blackmailer (1 hr. 55 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; Lincoln Square.*

Revival
New and Improved

Akira Kurosawa became an international sensation in 1951, when his *Rashomon* (starring Toshiro Mifune and Machiko Kyo, below) introduced Japanese cinema to the West. But the original release was poorly subtitled. Starting February 27, Film Forum presents a revamped print of this story of rape and murder in twelfth-century Kyoto—with every line of dialogue precisely translated. (See "Museums, Societies, Etc." for more info.)

Photograph from Film Forum.

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

Angelika Film Center—18 W. Houston St. (995-2000) *Dangerous Beauty; Good Will Hunting; Great Expectations; Gummo; Live Flesh; Mrs. Dalloway; Nil By Mouth.*

Art Greenwich Twin—Greenwich Ave. at 12th St. (505-CINE#616) *L. A. Confidential; The Full Monty.*

Cinema Village 12th St—22 E. 12th St. (924-3363) *Comrades, Almost a Love Story.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Film Forum—209 W. Houston St. (727-8110) *Fallen Angels; Happy Together; Moon Over Broadway; Rashomon; Shock Corridor.*

Quad Cinema—34 W. 13th St. (255-8800) *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life; The Break; Leather Jacket Love Story; Ma Vie en Rose.*

The Screening Room—54 Varick St. (below Canal) (334-2100) *Deconstructing Harry; The City of Lost Children.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Village East—189 Second Ave., at 12th St. (529-6799) *As Good As It Gets; The Borrowers; Hurricane Streets; Kundun; Love Walked In; Senseless; Sphere; The Rocky Horror Picture Show; The Wedding Singer.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Village Theatre VII—66 Third Ave., at 11th St. (982-0400) *The Apostle; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Titanic; Wag the Dog; Zero Effect.*

Waverly—323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (505-CINE#603) *The Boxer; I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me.*

14th–41st Streets

19th Street East—890 Broadway, at 19th St. (260-8000) *As Good As It Gets; Hurricane Streets; Love Walked In; Senseless; Wag the Dog; The Wedding Singer.*

34th Street Showplace—238 E. 34th St. (532-5544) *Great Expectations; Sphere; Titanic.*

Chelsea—260 W. 23rd St. (505-CINE#597) *The Apostle; Blues Brothers 2000; The Borrowers; The Gingerbread Man; Great Expectations; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Titanic; Zero Effect.*

Chelsea West—333 W. 23rd St. (505-CINE#614) *Good Will Hunting; Sphere.*

Murray Hill Cinemas—160 E. 34th St. (689-6548) *As Good As It Gets; Good Will Hunting; Palmetto; Wag the Dog.*

42nd–60th Streets

59th Street East—239 E. 59th St. (505-CINE#615) *The Boxer.*

Astor Plaza—44th St. bet. Broadway and Eighth Ave. (869-8340) *Titanic.*

Cinema I, II, Third Ave.—1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (753-6022) *Deconstructing Harry; Wag the Dog; The Wedding Singer.*

Coronet—993 Third Ave., bet. 59th and 60th Sts. (505-CINE#608) *The Gingerbread Man; Great Expectations.*

Criterion Center—1514 Broadway, bet. 44th and 45th Sts. (354-0900) *As Good As It Gets; Blues Brothers 2000; Desperate Measures; Fallen; Palmetto; Tomorrow Never Dies; The Wedding Singer.*

Crown Gotham—969 Third Ave., bet. 57th and 58th Sts. (759-2262) *Shall We Dance?.*

Eastside Playhouse—919 Third Ave., bet. 55th and 56th Sts. (755-3020) *Boogie Nights.*

Embassy 1—1560 Broadway, bet. 46th and 47th Sts. (302-0494) *Deep Rising.*

Embassy 2-3—701 Seventh Ave., bet. 47th and 48th Sts. (730-7262) *Amistad; Jackie Brown; Scream 2.*

Guild 50th Street—33 W. 50th St. (757-2406) *Kundun.*

Paris Theatre—4 W. 58th St. (688-3800) See "Museums, Societies, Etc."

State—1540 Broadway (391-2900) *Good Will Hunting; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere.*

Sutton—205 E. 57th St. (759-1411) *The Full Monty; Mrs. Brown.*

Worldwide Cinemas—340 W. 50th St. (505-CINE#610) *Home Alone 3; The Ice Storm; The Jackal; Kiss the Girls; The Postman; The Rainmaker.*

Ziegfeld—141 W. 54th St. (505-CINE#602) *Great Expectations.*

61st Street and Above, East Side

72nd St. East—1230 Third Ave., bet. 71st and 72nd Sts. (879-1313) *Sphere.*

86th Street—125 E. 86th St. (505-CINE#604) *Senseless; The Wedding Singer.*

86th Street East—210 E. 86th St. (249-1144) *Closed for Renovations.*

Beekman—1254 Second Ave., bet. 65th and 66th Sts. (505-CINE#606) *The Wings of the Dove.*

First & 62nd St. Cinema—400 E. 62nd St. (505-CINE#957) *The Apostle; Hurricane Streets; I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me; The Replacement Killers; Titanic.*

Gemini—1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (832-1670) *As Good As It Gets; Dangerous Beauty; Palmetto.*

New York Twin—1271 Second Ave., bet. 66th and 67th Sts. (744-7339) *L. A. Confidential; Good Will Hunting.*

Orpheum 7—1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (828-9738) *As Good As It Gets; Great Expectations; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Sphere; Titanic; Wag the Dog.*

UA East—1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (249-5100) *Good Will Hunting.*

61st Street and Above, West Side

62nd and Broadway—1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (505-CINE#864) *I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me.*

84th Street—2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (877-3600) *L.A. Confidential; Amistad; The Borrowers; Great Expectations; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Senseless.*

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas—30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway bet. 62nd and 63rd Sts. (757-2280) *The Apostle; Deconstructing Harry; Live Flesh; Ma Vie en Rose; Mrs. Dalloway; The Sweet Hereafter.*

Lincoln Square—1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (336-5000) *As Good As It Gets; Dangerous Beauty; The Gingerbread Man; Good Will Hunting; Hurricane Streets; Sphere; Titanic; Wag the Dog; The Wedding Singer; The Wings of the Dove; Zero Effect.* IMAX: *Across the Sea of Time; L5—First City in Space; Four Million House Guests; Titanic; Into the Deep.*

Metro Cinema—2626 Broadway, bet. 99th and 100th Sts. (505-CINE#609) *As Good As It Gets; I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me.*

New Coliseum—701 W. 181st St. (740-1545) *Amistad; Sphere; Titanic.*

Nova—3589 Broadway, bet. 147th and 148th Sts. (862-5728) *Senseless; Sphere; Titanic.*

Olympia Theatre—2770 Broadway, bet. 106th and 107th Sts. (505-CINE#613) *Great Expectations; Titanic.*

Regency—1987 Broadway, bet. 67th and 68th Sts. (505-CINE#585) *Afterglow.*

Bronx

Area Code 718

Bay Plaza—2210 Bartow Ave., behind Bay Plaza Mall (320-3020) *Blues Brothers 2000; The Borrowers; Deep Rising; Desperate Measures; Good Will Hunting; Hurricane Streets; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Concourse Plaza—214 E. 161th St. (588-8800) *Blues Brothers 2000; The Borrowers; Deep Rising; Mouse Hunt; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic.*

Whitestone—2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (409-9037) *The Borrowers; Deep Rising; Desperate Measures; Palmetto; The Replacement*

Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.

Brooklyn

Area Code 718

Alpine—6817 Fifth Ave., at 69th St. (777-FILM#580) *The Apostle; As Good As It Gets; Blues Brothers 2000; The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Great Expectations; Palmetto; Titanic.*

Canarsie—9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (251-0700) *Senseless; Sphere; Titanic.*

Cobble Hill—265 Court St. (596-9113) *The Apostle; As Good As It Gets; Good Will Hunting; Sphere; The Wedding Singer.*

Fortway—6720 Ft. Hamilton Pkwy., at 68th St. (777-FILM#578) *Hurricane Streets; The Replacement Killers; Sphere; Ulee's Gold; The Wedding Singer.*

Kenmore—Church Ave. nr. Flatbush Ave. (777-FILM#576) *Deep Rising; Hurricane Streets; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World.*

Kent Triplex—Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (338-3371) *Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Kings Plaza—5201 Kings Plaza; Flatbush Ave. at Ave. U (777-FILM#579) *Amistad; Blues Brothers 2000; The Borrowers; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World.*

Kingsway—946 Kings Hwy. at Coney Island Ave. (777-FILM#577) *As Good As It Gets; Great Expectations; Kundun; Palmetto; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Marboro—6817 Bay Pkwy., at 69th St. (232-4000) *Good Will Hunting; Senseless; Sphere; The Wedding Singer.*

Pavilion Theatre—188 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn (369-0838) *The Apostle; The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Palmetto; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer; The Wings of the Dove.*

Ridgewood—55–27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (821-5993) *The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic.*

The Movies at Sheepshead Bay—3907 Shore Pkwy, off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (615-1700) *L.A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; Blues Brothers 2000; The Borrowers; Great Expectations; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Queens

Area Code 718

Astoria—28–60 Steinway St. (726-1279) *Blues Brothers 2000; Great Expectations; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Bay Terrace—211–01 26th Ave. and Bell Blvd., Bayside (428-4040) *L. A. Confidential; The Apostle; Good Will Hunting; The Replacement Killers; Sphere; The Wedding Singer.*

Centre Sunnyside—42-17 Queens Blvd. (361-6869) *L. A. Confidential; The Borrowers; The Replacement Killers; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Cinema City—183–15 Horace Harding Expy., at 183rd St., Fresh Meadows (777-FILM#592) *As Good As It Gets; The Full Monty; Hurricane Streets; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Senseless.*

Cinemart—106–03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (261-2244) *The Apostle; The Borrowers; The Replacement Killers; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Continental—70–20 Austin St., Forest Hills (544-1020) *Blues Brothers 2000; The Full Monty; Good Will Hunting; Sphere.*

Crossbay—94–11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (848-1738) *Blues Brothers 2000; Deep Rising; Senseless; Sphere.*

Crossbay II—92–10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (641-5330) *L.A. Confidential; The Borrowers; Desperate Measures; Great Expectations; Hurricane Streets; The Replacement Killers; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Elmwood—57–02 Hoffman Dr., Elmhurst (429-4770) *The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Forest Hills—107–16 Continental Ave., at Queens Blvd. (261-7866) *Great Expectations; Palmetto.*

Fresh Meadows—Eastbound Service Road, at 190th St. (777-FILM#619) *The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Great Expectations; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Jackson Triplex—82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (478-6777) *Senseless; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Main Street Cinemas—72-66 Main St. (263-4828) *The Borrowers; Deconstructing Harry; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Midway—108–22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (261-8572) *Closed for Renovations.*

Movieworld—242–02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (423-7200) *Good Will Hunting; Great Expectations; Palmetto; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

North Shore Towers—27–10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (229-7702) *Good Will Hunting; The Sweet Hereafter.*

Plaza —103–14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (639-0012) *Sphere; Titanic.*

The Movies at Bayside—38–39 Bell Blvd., at 39th Ave. (225-7711) *As Good As It Gets; The Full Monty; Great Expectations; Senseless; Titanic.*

Trylon—98–81 Queens Blvd., at 66th Ave., Rego Park (459-8944) *As Good As It Gets.*

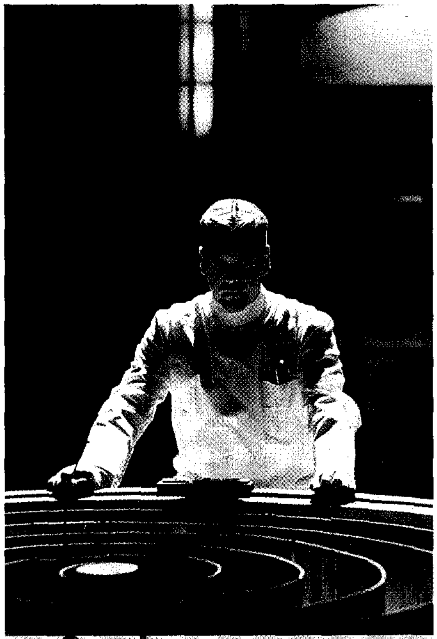
Staten Island

Area Code 718

Atrium—680 Arthur Kill Rd., nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (317-8300) *L.A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; The Borrowers; The Full Monty; Good Will Hunting; Great Expectations; Mouse Hunt; Palmetto; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Hylan Plaza—107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (351-0805) *The Full Monty; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

The Movies at Staten Island—141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (983-9600) *L.A. Confidential; The Apostle; As Good As It Gets; Blues Brothers 2000; The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Great Expectations; Hurricane Streets; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*



Opening

The Night Stalkers

In *Dark City,* Kiefer Sutherland (above) is a mysterious, supergroomed doctor who helps Rufus Sewell investigate why he's been framed for a series of brutal murders. The pair's detective work leads them to a band of underworld beings, creatures who use their thoughts to stop time and alter physical reality. The sci-fi adventure opens February 27.

Museums, Societies, Etc.

American Museum of the Moving Image—"All That Heaven Allows: A Douglas Sirk Retrospective." 2/28: *The Tarnished Angels* (1957) and *All I Desire* (1953). 3/1: *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* (1957) and *Imitation of Life* (1958). "Family Matinee." Through 2/20: *Fairy Tale: A True Story* (1997). 36-01 35th Ave., Astoria, Queens (718-784-0077); $12–$15 nonmembers; $8–$10 members; $4 ages 5–18.

Anthology Film Archives—2/24: Goran Rebic's *Jugofilm* (1997). "Karel Kachyna Retrospective." 2/24 and 2/26: *Long Live the Republic* (1965). 2/27–2/28: *Suffering* (1961), *Vertigo* (1962), and *The Ear* (1970). 2/27: *The Holy Night* (1974). 2/28: *Death of the Beautiful Roebucks* (1979). "Jean Renoir." 2/28: *La Nuit Du Carrefour* (1932). 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110); $7.

Brooklyn Museum of Art—"Black History Month Film Program." 2/28: *Inside Bedford Stuyvesant* (1968-69). 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000, ext. 230); $6; $4 members, students, and senior citizens.

Cinema Village 12th St—"Dennis Nyback Presents." 3/2: Jazz and Animation of the 1930s. 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363); $8.

Different Light—3/1: *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952). 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850); free.

Donnell Media Center—"Featuring . . . Erich von Stroheim." 3/4: *The Man You Loved to Hate* (1979). 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619); free.

Film Society of Lincoln Center (The Walter Reade Theater)—"A History of Hungarian Cinema." 2/25: *Bolshe Vita* (1995) and *The Witman Boys* (1997). "Music for the Movies: Toru Takemitsu" 2/27–2/28, 3/1, and 3/3–3/5: *Antonio Guadi* (1985). 2/27–2/28: *Woman in the Dunes* (1964). 2/27, 3/1, and 3/3: *Sharaku* (1995). 3/1 and 3/3: *Silence* (1971). 3/4–3/5: *Harakiri/Seppuku* (1962). "Movies for Kids." 2/28 and 3/1: *The Witches* (1990). Call 875-5601 for info. 65 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600); $8.50.

French Institute—2/24: *Les Mille et une recettes du cuisinier amoureux* (1996). 3/3: "Films from Quebec." Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160); $7, $10 double feature.

Japan Society—"Literature to Film." 2/27: *The Woman I Abandoned* (1969). 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015); $7.50.

Museum of Modern Art—"Big as Life: An American History of 8mm Films." 2/26: *Intimate Worlds 5: Suggestions of Memory, Images Past.* "Second Act." 2/24: *La ricotta* (1962) and *Fantasmi a Roma* (1960). 2/26: *Gold of Naples* (1954) and *Voyage to Italy* (1954). 2/27: *L'Avventura* (1959), *Allonsanfan* (1975), and *La battaglia di Algeri* (1965). 2/28: *I vinti* (1953) and *Colpire al cuore* (1982). "Academy Nominated Films." 2/27–2/28: Feature-length documentaries. "Family Films: Dynamic Duos." 2/28: Various shorts. "New Documentaries." 2/26–2/27: *George* (1997). "The Aeolian (Lipari) Islands." 2/24: *Volcano* (1950). 2/28: *Caro diario* (1993). 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9400); free with $9.50 admission.

Museum of Television & Radio—"TV Movies." Month of February: *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1985). 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6600); $6.

New York University—"Colour Screens: Film and Video by African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain." 2/27: *From the Workshop: Sankofa and the Black Audio Film Collective.* Tisch School of the Arts; free.

Paris Theatre—Through 2/27: "Views of Merchant Ivory: 3 Continents, 14 Films." 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800); $8.50; $5 seniors and children.

Symphony Space—"The Envelope Please: 50 Years of Foreign Film and the Academy Awards." 2/24: *The Bicycle Thief* (1949) and *When Father Was Away on Business* (1985). 3/3: *The Burmese Harp* (1956) and *The Tin Drum* (1979). 2537 Broadway, at 96th St. (864-5400); $8, $5 members.

The Screening Room—Sunday brunch: *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). 54 Varick St., below Canal St. (334-2100); $8 ($5 for Sunday brunch patrons).

YWCA Cine-Club—"A Celebration of Japanese Cinema." 2/28–3/1: *Tales of the Taira Clan* (1955). 610 Lexington Ave., at 53rd St. (735-9717); $5 members, $6 nonmembers.

Photograph by Jasin Boland/New Line Cinema.

theater

Martin McDonagh . . . *Art* . . . Mac Wellman

Broadway

Previews and Openings

Ah, Wilderness!—Lincoln Center presents Eugene O'Neill's only comedy. Debra Monk stars; Daniel Sullivan directs. $45–$55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/18 opening. *Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (239-6200).*

Art—Three male friendships unravel because of an expensive painting. *(Ars longa, amicitia brevis.)* Written by Yasmina Rez; Alan Alda, Alfred Molina, and Victor Garber star. $45–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/1 opening. *Royale Theatre, 242 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Cabaret—*Wilkommen!* Sam Mendes directs a revival of this eight-Tony-fabulous musical by Kander and Ebb. Natasha Richardson plays Sally Bowles; Alan Cumming plays the grinning emcee. Ron Rifkin and Mary Louise Wilson also star. $50–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Cabaret, bar, and banquette seating available. In previews for a 3/19 opening. *Club Expo, 124 W. 43rd St. (719-1300).*

The Deep Blue Sea—Edward Herrmann and Blythe Danner, both of whom appeared on Broadway years ago in *The Philadelphia Story,* reunite for this Terence Rattigan drama about a woman who leaves her husband for a younger, less responsible man. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Previews begin 2/28 for a 3/26 opening. *Roundabout Theatre Company Stage Right, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (719-1300).*

The Sound of Music—Returns to Broadway for the first time since its 1959 premiere. Hum along; bring the kids. Rebecca Luker, who played a memorable Magnolia in *Show Boat,* plays the nun turned governess, and Michael Siberry plays the widower captain. $50–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. In previews for a 3/12 opening. *Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Now Playing

Beauty and the Beast—A musical based on a movie based on a fairy tale. Setting box-office and, presumably, merchandising records even as we speak. Deborah Gibson plays the girl; Chuck Wagner plays the (hairy) boy. Lyrics by Tim Rice and Howard Ashman; music by Alan Menken. $22.50–$70. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened: 4/18/94. *Palace Theatre, 1564 Broadway, at 47th St. (307-4100).*

Bring In 'da Noise, Bring In 'da Funk—George C. Wolfe and Savion Glover's Tony-winning history of African-Americans as told through tap dancing, poetry, and song. $20–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs.*

The Capeman—Paul Simon's painstakingly crafted and vigorously ballyhooed new musical finally arrives. The score—a mix of salsa, rock, doo-wop, and gospel tunes—features more than 30 songs; the story, based on one of the most sensational double murders in New York history, is one of redemption, following Salvador Agron, the perp, for more than 30 years of his uncommon life, as he metamorphoses from gang tough to jailhouse poet. Book by Nobel Prize–winning poet Derek Walcott, direction and choreography by Mark Morris, and star turns by Ruben Blades and Marc Anthony. $50–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 1/29/98. *Marquis Theater, 211 W. 45th St. (307-4100).*

Cats—Now and for the foreseeable future. By Andrew Lloyd Webber, of course, with an assist from T. S. Eliot. $37.50–$65. Mon. and Tues. at 8, Wed. at 2 and 8, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. Opened: 10/7/82. *Winter Garden Theater, 1634 Broadway, at 50th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

Chicago—It was a gamble to transfer the Encores! production of *Chicago* to Broadway, but since *Chicago* is about women who kill their men and the mercenary lawyer who gets them off, gambling seems like the merest peccadillo. Especially when, as here, it pays off. Bebe Neuwirth does a scissors kick or two while maintaining her come-hither brand of snootiness; minimalism prevails. If Chicago in the twenties was like this, it was more fun than Periclean Athens. Also starring Marilu Henner, Hinton Battle, and Ernie Sabella. (Simon: 12/2/96.) $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/14/96. *Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

The Diary of Anne Frank—Natalie Portman, the electrifying teen cutie from *Beautiful Girls,* stars in this newly adapted version of the 1955 play. Also starring Linda Lavin, Harris Yulin, George Hearn, and Austin Pendleton. $40–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 12/4/97. *Music Box Theater, 239 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Ground Rules:

Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where half-price tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th St. and 2 World Trade Center, mezzanine level; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.

Opening

Disenchanted Forest

In keeping with its short but glorious history of genre corruption (remember the sweetheart hero from 'Duet!' who snacked on raw frogs?), Adobe Theatre Company presents 'The Handless Maiden,' an un–fairy tale for grown-ups. Performances begin February 25 at the Ohio Theatre. For tickets ($12) and more information, call 924-0077.

Photograph by Richie Famey.

Freak—The mambo energies of John Leguizamo are on thrilling display in this, his newest one-man show about a misspent and unholy adolescence. Horror stories about masturbation, the Fresh Air Fund, and his evil grandmother abound. $17.50–$55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. *Cort Theatre, 138 W. 48th St. (239-6200).*

Jackie: An American Life—As ominously titled as it is, this isn't a serious play. It isn't even a straight biography, though Gip Hoppe, the author, manages to cram in historical events both great and small. Instead, it relies on whimsical devices to convey some ideas about the nature of the First Lady's celebrity (the Rat Pack? LBJ? Joe Kennedy?—all puppets) and revels in portraits of the mundane. Margaret Colin stars. $35–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Closes 3/1. *Belasco Theater, 111 W. 44th St. (239-6200).*

Jekyll & Hyde—Man turns into beastly man, all in the name of science. Book and lyrics by Leslie Bricusse, music by Frank Wildhorn. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8; Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/28/97. *Plymouth Theatre, 236 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

The Last Night of Ballyhoo—This romantic comedy, set in 1939 Atlanta on the eve of the premiere of *Gone With the Wind,* is Alfred Uhry's first effort since *Driving Miss Daisy.* The wait clearly paid off; he won the 1997 Tony award for Best Play. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 2/27/97. *Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (307-4100).*

Les Misérables—The implacable Inspector Javert hounding the innocent ex-convict Jean Valjean; the pathetic Fantine, wronged by the entire world, dying as she entrusts her daughter, Cosette, to the now-prosperous Mayor Valjean; the dastardly Thénardiers bringing up Cosette as a scullion while cosseting their own daughter, Eponine—what a story! Just synopsizing the plot brings tears to the iciest eyes. (Simon: 3/31/97.) $15–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 3/12/87. *Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (239-6200). 3 hrs. 15 mins.*

The Life—A contemporary street opera set in eighties Times Square. Lillias White and Chuck Cooper just picked up Tony awards for their performances. Music and lyrics by Cy Coleman and Ira Gasman; book by Coleman, Gasman, and David Newman. $40–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 4/26/97. *Ethel Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St. (239-6200).*

The Lion King—This spectacle rightfully earns that most abused of epithets: *magical.* Kiddies will delightedly swallow it whole, unless they are tiny and flappable. But this is the one such show adults will feast on, too, mostly because of the wonders wrought by Julie Taymor, who designed and directed this cornucopia of dazzlements. Puppetry from East and West is put to superlative use, yet the actors, singers, and dancers are accorded enough humanity to ply their anthropomorphic skills. And Taymor has found ways to transmute the strictly cartoonish bravura of the big-screen Lion King onto a stage so that nothing is lost in translation. (Simon: 12/1/97). $20–$80. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened 11/13/97. *New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (307-4100).*

Miss Saigon—This reworking of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly,* set in Vietnam during the fall of Saigon, is now one of Broadway's ten longest-running musicals. Music by Claude-Michel Schonberg; lyrics by Alain Boublil and Richard Maltby Jr.; directed by Nicholas Hytner. $15–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/11/91. *Broadway Theater, 1681 Broadway, at 53rd St. (239-6200).*

The Old Neighborhood—Three interconnected one-act plays by David Mamet, starring Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Mary McCann, and Jack Willis. Directed by Scott Zigler. $45–$55. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 11/19/97. *Booth Theatre, 222 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

The Phantom of the Opera—Nine leads, ten years, $357 million, and almost 7 million theatergoers later, Andrew Lloyd Webber's blockbuster continues to pack them in. $15–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 1/26/88. *Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

Ragtime—A musical based on E. L. Doctorow's historical novel, with a book by Terrence McNally and music by the composer-lyricist team of Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens. The epic, neatly trimmed and tidied for the stage, braids the fates of three fictitious families—one black, one Jewish, one Wasp—and an assortment of historical characters. $31–$125. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 1/18/97. *Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. (307-4100).*

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as it might be lived by a gaggle of contemporary sick and hip types living in the East Village. $30–$67.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. *Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (307-4100). 2 hrs. 45 mins.*

The Scarlet Pimpernel—You've seen the billboard. Now come see the show. It's got romance, suspense, swashbuckling, and a whole bunch of eighteenth-century stuff; if it succeeds, Broadway could well be on its way to becoming a French Revolution theme park. Pop composer Frank Wildhorn (*Jekyll & Hyde*) did the score. Nan Knighton adapted Baroness Orczy's novel for the stage. Christine Andreas, Terrence Mann, and Douglas Sills star. $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/9/97. *Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St. (307-4100).*

1776—The book of this 1969 musical, the gifted Peter Stone's masterpiece, is surely one of the best ever. Thrillingly incorporating the potentially divisive issue of slavery, it succeeds in keeping us, despite our knowledge of the outcome, in a state of wonderfully paradoxical suspense. Splendid as was Peter Hunt's original production, this Scott Ellis revival very nearly matches it. It will provide you not only with three hours of choice theatergoing but also with three very rich hours of life. Music and lyrics by Sherman Edwards. (Simon: 8/25/97.) $20–$75. Wed.–Sat. at 8; Wed. and Sat. at 2; Sun. at 1 and 6:30. *Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (307-4100).*

Smokey Joe's Cafe: The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—They say the neon lights are bright on Broadway, and when this show—drawn from the songbook Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller wrote to accompany the American baby-boomer childhood experience—breezes into New York City, people gonna scrape and bow. A tip, tip, tip, young blood: Buy yourself a ticket, sit down in the very first row. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. $65–$75. *At the Virginia Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. (239-6200)?* Uh-huh. *2 hrs. 10 mins.*

The Sunshine Boys—This Neil Simon play is a triumph of strategy. (1) It is full of one-liners: easily detachable and portable laughs. (2) The main characters, a retired vaudeville team, now hate each other, hence ever-popular insult comedy. (3) Willie Clark and Al Lewis are also Jewish, so we get audience-tickling Jewish jokes. (4) The background is show business, providing cherished showbiz humor. (5) A play about old croakers will capture Broadway's senescent regulars. (6) Big Apple–vs.–New Jersey jests draw in the trans-Hudsonians. (7) As ex-vaudevillians, Willie and Al generate nostalgia for a vanished world. Add the stage-screen-and-TV-enshrined duo of Jack Klugman (Willie) and Tony Randall (Al), and it's platinum-edged-securities time. This production at the National Actors Theatre revival is rattling good fun. (Simon: 1/5/98.) $20–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 12/8/97. *Lyceum Theatre, 149 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Titanic—What it lacks in suspense it makes up for in Tony awards (five, in 1997, including Best Musical). Music and lyrics by Maury Yeston; book by Peter Stone. Directed by Richard Jones. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/23/97. *Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (307-4100).*

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Amazing Grace—Marsha Mason stars as a condemned murderer awaiting her execution. Written by Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Cristofer (*The Shadow Box*); presented by Blue Light Theater Company. $37.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3. Previews begin 2/24 for a 3/15 opening at 7. *Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. (239-6200).*

BAFO (Best and Final Offer)—A dark comedy about the havoc downsizing wreaks on the white-male psyche. Written by Tom Strelich; directed by Robert Kalfin. $37.50. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 2:30 and 7. Previews begin 2/25 for a 3/8 opening. *American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. (239-6200).*

The Beauty Queen of Leenane—The hugely successful Martin McDonagh comedy—about a lonely middle-aged woman and her mother's attempts to sabotage her romantic life—crosses the Atlantic for an eight-week engagement at a theater by the same name. $35–$40. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. In previews for a 2/26 opening. *Atlantic Theater Company, 336 W. 20th St. (239-6200).*

A Flea in Her Ear—The Roundabout Theatre Company presents a brand-new adaptation of Georges Feydeau's 1907 farce. Starring Mark Linn-Baker; directed by Bill Irwin. $50. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. In previews for a 3/5 opening. *Roundabout's Laura Pels Theatre, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (719-1300).*

Hazelwood Jr. High—An all-girl clique dissolves; mayhem ensues. The very fine New Group presents a site-specific production of Rob Urbinati's new play. Chloe Sevigny, who made a striking debut in the film *Kids,* stars. $15–$30. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 4 and 8. In previews for a 3/5 opening. *Intermediate School 70, 333 W. 17th St. (279-4200).*

I Will Come Back—A new musical celebrating Judy Garland's life. Written and directed by Timothy Gray, an associate of the diva; starring Tommy Femia, a cabaret performer who's made a healthy living out of impersonating her. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. In previews for a 2/25 opening. *Players Theatre, 115 MacDougal St. (239-6200).*

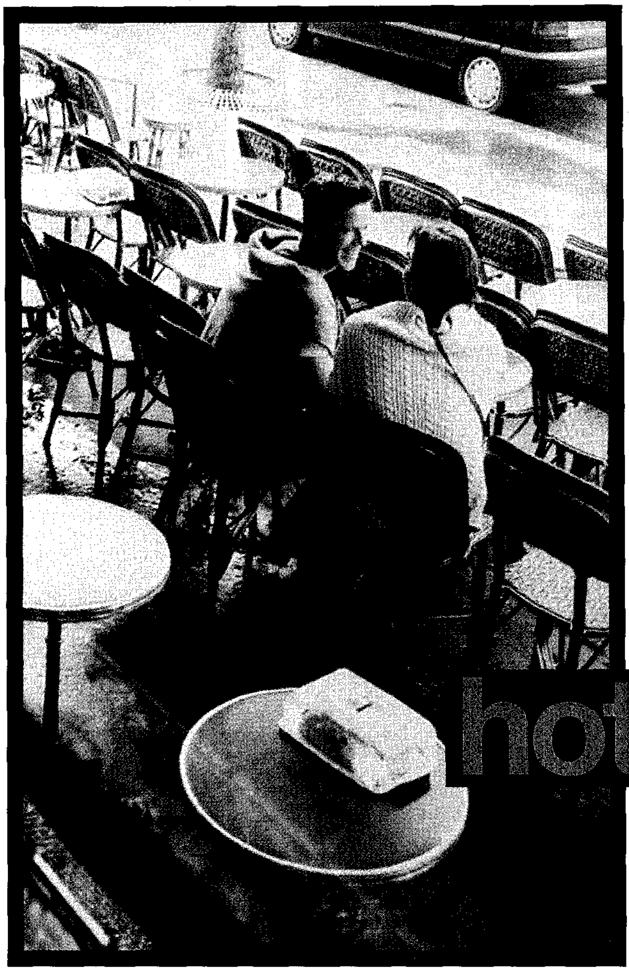
Macbeth—Is that a dagger Alec Baldwin sees before him? Or is it Angela Bassett, sharpening her nails? Or George C. Wolfe, shouting stage directions? $40. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2. In previews for a 3/12 opening. *The Public Theater's Martinson Hall, 425 Lafayette St. (239-6200).*

Opening
Tabula Rasa

For whatever reasons (his dignified bearing? his Parthenon-perfect bone structure? his facility with accents?), Victor Garber always makes an irresistibly dashing scholar. In James Cameron's *Titanic,* he played the ship's sensitive and literate master builder, raising his eyebrows in amused recognition when a passenger mentioned Sigmund Freud. In Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia,* he portrayed a pompous, driven historian. In *Art,* Yasmina Reza's new drama opening this Sunday at the Royale, he's a dermatologist and art enthusiast with a passion for Seneca and Paul Valéry. All of these gentlemen have graduate degrees; Garber, who decided to pursue an acting career at 16, never even made it past his first year of high school. "When we first started rehearsing *Art,*" says the actor, now 45, "the whole cast went to MOMA, and I was walking around thinking, 'I feel so ill-equipped to be judging all this.' " Garber's character, Serge, is a trifle uncertain about his aesthetic judgments, too, and when he impulsively purchases an all-white, unblemished canvas—perfect for a dermatologist—his two closest friends attack his taste and motives. "I love being cast as an intellectual," sighs Garber. "It—" He stops. The plaintive strains of the *Titanic* theme song have begun to fill the restaurant. "Oh, God," he says. "Should I start talking with an Irish accent?" He grins. "Anyhow, being cast as an intellectual unleashes a kind of power. I could never say anything that clever." One wishes he hadn't admitted this. Garber's appeal is so intertwined with the superior intelligence of his characters that it's almost impossible to accept his more natural, inevitable limitations. He should be able to freely quote Shelley. And do multivariable calculus in his head. Garber smiles and makes another cheerful confession. "I had to read *Arcadia* four times," he says, "before I knew what it was about." **JENNIFER SENIOR**

Left to right: Alan Alda, Alfred Molina, and Victor Garber.

Photograph by Lois Greenfield.



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My One Good Nerve—Ruby Dee's one-woman show based on her book by the same name. $20. Wed. at 3 and 8, Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 6. Through 3/8. *Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, 68th St. at Lexington Ave. (772-4448).*

Richard II—The season's *Richard* renaissance continues apace with this production by the Pearl Theatre Company. $18–$30. Tues. and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Opens 2/23 at 7. *Pearl Theatre Company, 80 St. Marks Pl. (598-9802).*

Previews

Big Mac Attack

The Ridge Theater, which has never met two media it couldn't mix, performs two short plays by word alchemist Mac Wellman. 'The Damned Thing' and 'The Sandalwood Box' begin previews at La MaMa on February 27.

Tallulah's Party—Tovah Feldshuh stars in a musical about the celebrity's life—and who's more Tallulah than Tovah? Music by Arthur Siegel, lyrics by Mae Richard, book by Bob Griffiths. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 6. Previews begin 2/24 for a 3/8 opening. *Homefront Theatre, 236 W. 54th St. (581-5866).*

Now Playing

As Bees in Honey Drown—Socialite Alexa Vere de Vere—one part Hepburn, two parts eyeliner, three parts luxury addict—enlists a young author to write a screenplay about her life. Written by Douglas Carter Beane; alertly directed by Mark Brokaw (*How I Learned to Drive*). Starring Bo Foxworth and J. Smith-Cameron. $47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 7/24/97. *Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (239-6200).*

Benita Canova—Struck by Balthus's erotic depictions of little girls, Richard Foreman responded with this, his own metaphysical portrait of sex and violence among the nubile. $15. Tues. and Thurs.–Sun. at 8. Through 4/5. *Ontological Theatre at St. Marks, 131 10th St. (533-4650).*

Black Humor—Lewis Black peddles his brand of shrewd, informed political comedy without, amazingly, invoking Bill Clinton's weakness for Big Macs or Al Gore's resemblance to plywood. $25–$27.50. Wed. and Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 8 and 10:30. Through 3/1. *Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. (239-6200).*

Blue Man Group: Tubes—Smart silliness, with toilet paper, neon-colored paint, cereal, etc. Wildly inventive, and appropriate for just about everyone—kids, adults, foreigners, haters and lovers of performance art. $39–$49. Tues., Wed., Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 4 and 7. Opened: 11/17/91. *Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (254-4370).*

The Broadway Kids Sing Broadway—A musical revue of songs made famous by Broadway kids. Expect tunes from *Annie, The Sound of Music, The Wizard of Oz, Oliver!,* and *Bye Bye Birdie.* $20. Sat. and Sun. at noon. John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (354-2220).

Christopher Columbus—The first of a multiculturally diverse series called *3 by 3.* Written by Nikos Kazantzakis; directed by Tony Award winner Lloyd Richards. $20. Wed.–Fri. at 7:30, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3. Opened 2/18. *Harry De Jur Playhouse, 466 Grand Street (353-1176).*

Eyes For Consuela—A new play by Sam Shepard, based on Octavio Paz's short story *The Blue Bouquet.* While wandering through the Mexican jungle, an American traveler is taken hostage by a love-struck bandit who demands not money but his victim's eyes. Starring David Strathairn; directed by Terry Kinney. $35. Tues.–Sun. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. *Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212).*

Fantasticks—The musical perennial that, happily, refuses to go away. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 7, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened: 5/3/60. *Sullivan St. Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St. (674-3838).*

Forbidden Broadway Strikes Back!—Some titles say it all, and Gerard Alessandrini's newest update of his long-running musical spoof poking fun at the assorted absurdities of the Great White Way couldn't arrive in town at a more—well, let's be kind and say propitious time. $40–$45. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8:15, Sat. at 2:30 and 8:15, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30; food and drink available/optional. *Stardust Theatre, Broadway at 51st St. (239-6200).*

The Good Doctor—Neil Simon's comedy, adapted from a Chekhov short story, is presented by the Melting Pot Theatre. $25. Wed.–Fri. at 7:30, Sat. at 2 and 7:30, Sun. at 2 and 7. Through 3/1. *Theater of the Riverside Church, 120th. St., at Riverside Dr. (279-4200).*

Goose-Pimples—The New Group inaugurates its fall season with this scabrous comedy by Mike Leigh, writer and director of the films *Naked, Secrets and Lies,* and *Career Girls.* Scott Elliott directs. $25–$30. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3. Through 3/1. *Intar Theatre, 420 W. 42nd St. (279-4200).*

Grandma Sylvia's Funeral—An audience-participation comedy akin to *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding,* written by Glenn Wein and Amy Lord Blumsack. When Grandma Sylvia dies, a power struggle ensues among family members. $37.50–$57.50, which includes a mitzvah meal. Opened: 10/9/94. Wed. at 2 and 7:30, Thurs. at 7:30, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 1 and 5. *Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (691-1555).*

Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde—From letters, biographies, and court transcripts, writer-director Moisés Kaufman has put together an absorbing show about Oscar Wilde's 1895 trial for "gross indecency with male persons." $20–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, and Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 6/5/97. *Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane (307-4100).*

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—John Cameron Mitchell—actor, director, and founding member of the Drama Dept.—wrote and stars in this rock concert–cum–musical, in which a German war bride finds herself in a Kansas trailer park and achieves self-actualization, not to mention tabloid fame, through songwriting. Featuring Stephen Trask and his downtown band, Cheater. $35. Mon at 8, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. Opened 2/14/98. *Jane Street Theatre at the Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. (239-6200).*

How I Learned to Drive—Paula Vogel's play benefits from an original slant: child molestation as an act of consenting partners, with the child as a willing participant. Miss Vogel has written a memory play about a pedophile and his big-breasted niece by marriage, Uncle Peck and Li'l Bit, names a trifle too apt to ring true. The driving lessons Uncle Peck gives Li'l Bit over the years are a slow, careful—even caring—seduction. Mark Brokaw has directed inventively. (Simon: 3/31/97). Now starring Molly Ringwald and Cotter Smith. $45–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, and Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 3/16/97. *Century Theater, 111 E. 15 St. (239-6200).*

Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly—An irrepressible, technicolor celebration of puns, fabric, and gay life. Its costumer and musical "conceiver," Howard Crabtree, died in June of 1996, just days after completing the revue. $45. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 2 and 5. *Douglas Fairbanks Theater, 432 W. 42nd St. (239-6200).*

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—They're here. They're straight. Get used to it. It's a daring innovation, perhaps, but this musical revue about what, in the context of most contemporary musicals, seems an amusingly quaint subject these days—heterosexual love—has bravely decided to buck the trend. $47.50–$50. Mon. and Tues at 8, Wed. at 2:30 and 8, Fri at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 3. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (239-6200).*

Joseph Gabriel Magic—Magician Joseph Gabriel mixes sleights of hand with large-scale illusions. $25–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. (239-6200).*

June Moon—A revival of a revival. Last year, the Drama Dept. brought back this 1929 comedy by Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman to great acclaim; this winter, the story of the Tin Pan Alley songwriter who falls for a big-city sophisticate comes roaring back, after a bit of tweaking at the McCarter Theatre. Directed by Mark Nelson. $20–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 1/15/97. *Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave., bet. 13th and 14th Sts. (239-6200).*

Late Nite Catechism—Maripat Donovan as a parochial-school-teaching nun backed by a magisterium of unassailable moral authority and some mean wrist action with a ruler. $35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 5. *St. Luke's Church Annex, 308 W. 46th St. (239-6200).*

The Maiden's Prayer—A new comedy from Nicky Silver *(Pterodactyls, Raised in Captivity)* about five adults interconnected through blood, friendship, marriage, and less meaningful unions. Starring Joanna Going, Patricia Clarkson, Daniel Jenkins, Geoffrey Nauffts and Christopher C. Fuller. Directed by Evan Yionoulis. $35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. *Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. (353-3874).*

The Mandala—A new psychological suspense drama from Waldemar Hansen about the suicide of an American painter. Presented by White Heron, Inc.; directed by Cyndy Marion. $25. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. Through 3/8. *Hudson Guild Theater, 441 W. 26th St. (354-2220).*

Mindgames—Marc Salem, a mentalist and former director of research for *Sesame Street,* does a slew of fancy math tricks, stops his own pulse, and predicts the contents of people's wallets. $40. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2, 7, and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 11/17/97. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (239-6200).*

Mizlansky/Zilinsky or "Schmucks"—A new comedy from John Robin Baitz about a pair of Hollywood hustlers' last-ditch effort to seal a deal. Nathan Lane, fresh from Hollywood, where he evaded mice and other vermin, plays one of the two title schmucks; Joe Mantello, the talented young actor who directed Neil Simon's *Proposals,* directs here, too. $47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 2:30 and 7. *Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212).*

Murdered by the Mob—When this family gets together, it's murder. *Heh heh heh.* One of two interactive mob comedies now running Off Broadway; a four-course meal is included, plus take-home gifts and fake Academy Awards to the audience's best

Photograph by Fred Tietz.

actors. $55. Fri. at 7:30 and Sat. at 7. *Steak Brokers Club, 393 Eighth Ave., bet. 29th and 30th Sts. (800-MURDERINC).*

Never the Sinner—The sensational story of Leopold and Loeb—two wealthy, well-educated teenagers who in 1924 murdered a young boy on a whim—moves from the American Jewish Theatre, where it played to great acclaim earlier this season, to a home further uptown. $25–$45. Mon. at 8, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 3. *John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (239-6200).*

Perfect Crime—Warren Manzi's long-running thriller about a wealthy psychiatrist accused of murdering her husband, and the small-town detective who tries to prove she committed the "perfect crime." $35. Mon. and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/5/87. *Duffy Theatre, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. (695-3401).*

Pride's Crossing—One of our subtlest playwrights (Tina Howe) and one of our most incisive performers (Cherry Jones) have combined talents to give us this delicate, minor-key memory play. It rehearses the life of Mabel Tidings Bigelow from 10 to 90 in seemingly random order, the way reality and remembrance play hopscotch with each other. Mabel is a quirky, headstrong, despotic nonagenarian, a New England matriarch whose high point was being the first woman to swim the English Channel the harder way, from England to France. Cherry Jones has to be seen to be believed—if then. Without aid from makeup, she roams fast and free across the decades, embodying all ages and conditions through the sheer power of acting. (Simon: 12/22/97.) $50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Through 4/5. *Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (239-6200).*

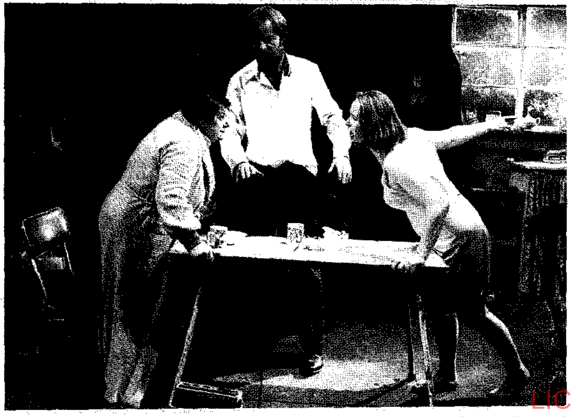
R & J—A four-man, prop-free version of *Romeo and Juliet* that may stand out among the tragedy's many newfangled interpretations. The show was well reviewed when it played earlier this season at Expanded Arts, and the conceit—that a quartet of private-school boys perform Shakespeare's drama on a lark and actually learn something—has its charms. $40. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. *John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (354-2220).*

Revenge in the Mob—The inevitable offspring of interactive comedies *Grandma Sylvia's Funeral* and *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*. A four-course meal is included, so we'll assume the carnage isn't graphic. $60. Fri. and Sat. at 8. *Arno Ristorante, 141 W. 38th St. (1-888-MOB-BOYS).*

Opening

Mother Knows Best

Martin McDonagh, the Anglo-Irish playwright with the precociously long résumé, makes his American debut this week with *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, a comedy about an old woman's attempts to sabotage her daughter's love life. The play was one of four by McDonagh (now all of 27) to run simultaneously in London last season; it opens here, at the Atlantic Theater, on February 26.



Photograph by Ivan Kyncl.

Richard II and Richard III—Are presented in rotating repertory by the always estimable Theater for a New Audience. A company of eighteen actors plays 60 roles; Ron Daniels directs. $37.50 per *Richard*. Schedule varies. *Through 4/5. Playhouse at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. (279-4200).*

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—There is a decent amount of merriment to be had from this revue. Inspired—or incited—by a homonymous travel guide, this show by a number of hands pokes fun at every aspect of travel, from the hopeless phone calls for airline reservations to the joys of sandy Uzbekistan, from lost baggage to lost illusions, from Hertz to other hurts and frustrations. Nothing is overlooked, though some things are a mite undercooked. Even the Cath*t*ilian li*th*p ge*th* a tuneful *th*ong tribute. (Simon: 12/15/97.) $40; optional dinner one hour before curtain. Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7:30 and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened 10/30/97. *Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (799-4599).*

Shopping and Fucking—And how these two pursuits intersect in the lives of five young Londoners. The play, by newcomer Mark Ravenhill, was a sensation last year in the West End; it opens here with a homegrown cast. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 3. Opened 2/2. *New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. (460-5475).*

The Show Goes On—Tom Jones and Harvey Schmidt offer a charming retrospective of their work in this revue. Not at all a dreary "And then we wrote" ego trip, this is a selective overview of the high and low points of their joint career, whose best known peaks were *The Fantasticks, 110 in the Shade,* and *I Do! I Do!* What we get here is Schmidt, ebullient at the piano, and Jones as the choicest of compères and raconteurs evoking the history of creating Broadway and Off Broadway musicals, as well as writing for nightclubs, cabarets, and movies. Through their personal prism, Schmidt and Jones cover something bigger: the rise and fall of show music in the past four decades. (Simon: 1/12/98). $30–$35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. Through 2/28. *Theatre at Saint Peter's Church, Citicorp Center, 54th St. and Lexington Ave. (935-5820).*

Stomp—As the title implies, a loud, aggressive, and energetic show in which a troupe of performers dances, claps, and generally bangs on everything in sight. Featuring buckets, brooms, trash-can lids, and, yes, the kitchen sink. $24.50–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened: 2/27/94. *Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., bet. 7th and 8th Sts. (477-2477).*

10 Naked Men—See title. Written and directed by Ronnie Larsen, the author of *Making Porn*. $30–$35. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. Opened 10/16/97. *Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. (239-6200).*

That's Life!—A musical revue about Jewish family life. $25. Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2. *Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. (838-9090).*

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding—A wedding at *St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St.*, then a reception at *Vinnie's, 147 Waverly Pl.*, with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. Wonderfully tacky—and it's lasted longer than a lot of real marriages. $65–$75. Tues.–Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. Opened: 2/6/88. *(239-6200).*

Two Pianos, Four Hands—Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt, a pair of talented pianists who never made it to the recital halls, wax philosophical about pushy parents, arrogant students, and smug concert judges. $40–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. *Promenade Theater, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (239-6200).*

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach, who made his Broadway debut more than a half-century ago, stars in this new comedy about a relationship between a young man and an older Jewish widower. $35–$45. Written by Jeff Baron; directed by Lonny Price. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. *Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. (505-0700).*

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art

Close's Subjects Speak...Rose Marasco

Galleries

Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

Stuart Arends—Small-scale minimal paintings on boxlike supports; through 3/28. Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. (734-3600).

Reynolds Beal—Paintings of harbor scenes and towns along America's east coast, executed between the 1890s and the 1940s; through 3/21. Beacon Hill, 980 Madison Ave. (734-3636).

Carol Diehl—Recent paintings depicting dense configurations of numbers, words, and symbols; through 3/14. Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (535-8810).

Jean Fautrier—Paintings that depict still life and nudes set in a looming color space, by this seminal French artist (1898–1964) whose works were admired by Mark Rothko; through 4/11. Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (988-1623).

Sam Francis—Biomorphic abstract paintings produced early in the artist's career, between 1959–61, when he was preoccupied almost exclusively with the exploration of blue; through 3/31. Gray, 1018 Madison Ave. (472-8787).

Michael Heizer—Wood laminate constructions printed with geologic photographic imagery; through 3/7. Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (794-0550).

Peter Schroth—Intimate landscape views in oil on wood; through 3/28. Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. (861-7338).

Hedda Sterne—A selection of abstract paintings and drawings from 1960 to the present; through 3/28. CDS, 76 E. 79th St. (772-9555).

57th Street Area

David Bierk—Paintings of landscapes and still lifes that refer to works by Old Masters and nineteenth-century American artists; through 3/21. American Associated Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (399-5510).

Carl W. Peters—Impressionist landscape paintings of New York's Genesee Valley and the harbors of Cape Ann, Massachusetts; through 4/4. Spanierman, 45 E. 58th St. (832-0208).

Janet Fish—Recent still-life paintings; through 3/7. DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave. (247-2111).

Morris Graves—Paintings that depict emblematic images of the moon, serpents, birds, and vessels; through 3/28. Schmidt-Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. (888-1122).

Donald Judd—Early fabricated works; through 3/21. Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. (421-3292).

Ellsworth Kelly—Black-and-white prints; through 3/14. Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. (489-3331).

Anne Kraus—A survey of ceramic pots from the past fifteen years; through 3/7. Clark, 24 W. 57th St. (246-2205).

Loren MacIver—Paintings of dreamlike images of the city, landscape, home, and studio; through 3/14. De Nagy, 724 Fifth St. (262-5050).

Michel Nedjar—An exhibition pairing the mixed-media paintings of this self-taught artist with works by Expressionists; through 3/14. St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (245-6734).

Pablo Picasso—An exhibition of prints focusing on the artist's collaborations with various printmakers; through 3/14. Krugier, 41 E. 57th St. (755-7288).

Ground Rules:

Galleries are generally open Tues. through Sat. from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6.

Harvey Quaytman—New geometric paintings on cross-shaped canvases; through 3/14. McKee, 745 Fifth Ave. (688-5951).

Linda Sokolowski—Paintings of southwestern landscape views; through 3/7. Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave. (307-5730).

Anne Truitt—Recent sculptures; through 3/21. Danese, 41 E. 57th St. (223-2227).

Paul Waldman—Recent paintings of figures in reductive landscapes; 2/25–3/28. Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (245-2888).

Jeff Wall—Cibachrome transparency lightboxes and large-scale black-and-white photographs from the past three years; through 3/14. Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (977-7160).

Helen Miranda Wilson—New paintings that depict the sky from the perspective of looking upwards; through 4/9. McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (319-1996).

William Zorach—Sculpture, drawings, and watercolors; through 3/14. Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. (752-1223).

SoHo and TriBeCa

Michael Ashkin/Charlie White—New sculpture and photographs/A magazine-pictorial installation titled *Dominatrix* that depicts the adventures of a she-demon. Through 3/21. Rosen, 130 Prince St. (941-0203).

Betsy Bauer/Lydia Rubio—Paintings and monoprints of botanical images juxtaposed with manuscripts and musical scores/An installation of cigar boxes whose exterior lids are painted and whose interiors contain symbolic objects. Through 3/14. Bridgewater/Lustberg, 560 Broadway (941-6355).

Jeremy Blake/Enoc Perez—A collection of scripted drawings on the hallucinatory exploits of a demented director-writer-producer/Portraits of people in the artist's life. Through 3/14. Bronwyn Keenan, 3 Crosby St. (431-5083).

Jennifer Bornstein—A film and photographs that depict the artist interacting with young people in playgrounds, parks, libraries, and other public locations; through 3/14. Gorney, 100 Greene St. (966-4480).

Beverly Buchanan—Sculptures and drawings of shacks; through 3/21. Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St. (431-4224).

Christopher Bucklow—Videos, still photographs, lightbox sculptures, and a jewel that explore the processes of fission and fusion; through 3/14. Kasmin, 74 Grand St. (219-3219).

Daniel Buren—Three series of unique prints by the French conceptualist; through 3/14. Gemini G.E.L. at Weyl, 375 Broadway (219-1446).

Marie José Burki—Recent videos that explore the unbridgeable differences between animals and people; through 3/14. Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. (965-0753).

Elizabeth Catlett—Recent figurative sculpture in wood, terra cotta, marble, and bronze by this artist who began her career in the forties and whose work is currently the subject of a retrospective at the Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, New York; through 3/4. Kelly, 591 Broadway (226-1660).

Lars Chellberg—Ephemeral outdoor works involving spiders, crickets, and other creatures; through 2/21. Fung, 537 Broadway (334-6242).

Christy Rupp/Franz Vana—An installation of metal, glass and paper sculptures of viruses and bacteria clusters that attack the human body/Photographs. Through 3/21. TZ'Art, 28 Wooster St. (966-9059).

George Condo—New collage paintings combining figuration and abstraction; through 3/7. Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. (431-9224).

Diana Cooper/Anissa Mack—Obsessive doodle paintings/The artist's version of the Great Cardiff Giant, a twelve-foot-tall, 2,000-pound petrified man that was first unearthed and exhibited in 1869. Through 3/21. Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (941-5711).

Laura Cottingham—"Not for Sale: Feminism and Art in the USA During the 1970s," a video essay including early video and performance works and rare archival footage of activist protests, consciousness-raising sessions, paintings, sculptures, and installations; through 3/14. Apex, 291 Church St. (431-5270).

Herman de Vries—An installation, works on paper, and artists' books; through 3/28. Inglett, 100 Wooster St. (343-0573).

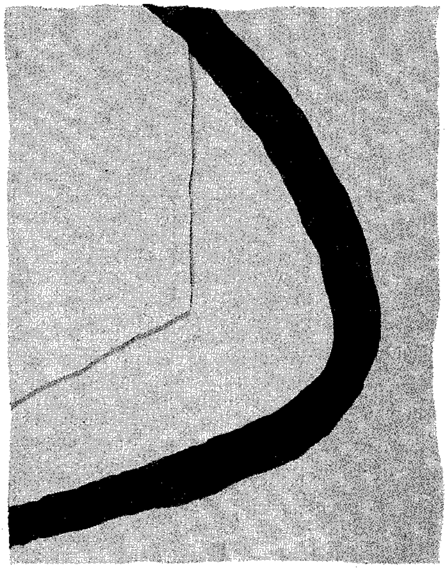
Peter Dreher—Three separate installations of the artist's paintings of nudes, flowers, and glasses; through 3/7. Knowlton, 568 Broadway (966-2625).

Yizhak Elyashiv—Large-scale drypoints that depict random configurations of grains of wheat; through 3/14. Senior, 375 W. Broadway (941-0906).

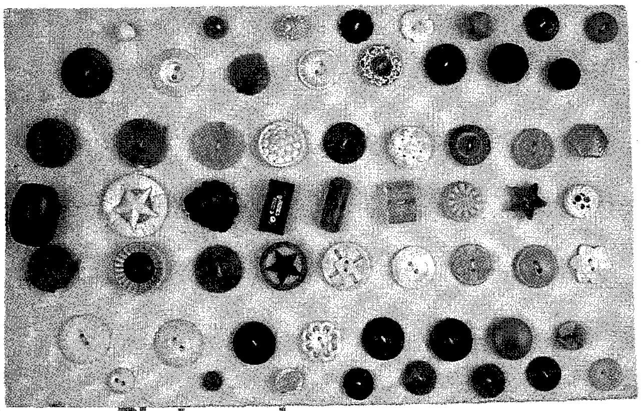
Dan Flavin—Drawings and installations of fluorescent light; through 3/14. Castelli, 420 W. Broadway (431-5160).

Cheryl Goldsleger—Large multi-panel geometric paintings; through 3/21. Rosenberg + Kaufman, 115 Wooster St. (431-4838).

Hotline **Few artists have consistently accomplished so much with so little: Richard Tuttle pushes shape, line, and just two colors to maximal effect in his new paintings on plywood, works he *insistently refers to as sculptures. At Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene Street; through March 21.***



Photograph by Dorothy Zeidman/Sperone Westwater.



Photography

Woman's Work

Rose Marasco pays homage to New England womanhood by photographing her collection of household artifacts. Some are shot in unlikely settings (a rolling pin balanced on a rocky ledge); others, such as buttons sewn on cards (above), retain their original orderly character. At Sarah Morthland Gallery, 225 Tenth Avenue, between 23rd and 24th Streets; through March 7.

Photograph courtesy of the Sarah Morthland Gallery, New York.

Joseph Grigley/Kathleen Gilje—A collaborative installation that explores the restoration of Caravaggio's *Musicians;* through 3/14. Bravin Post Lee Temporary, 476 Broome St. (966-2676).

Toland Grinell—A installation that suggests a personal museum; through 3/14. Basilico, 26 Wooster St. (966-1831).

Bruno Hadjadj—A sculptural interpretation of the 1656 Velazquez painting *Las Meninas;* through 3/14. 123 Watts Gallery, 123 Watts St. (219-1482).

Arturo Herrera—A installation of minimally presented objects in a variety of media, among them wall painting, photography, sculpture, and works on paper; through 3/7. Wooster Gardens, 558 Broadway (941-6210).

Herman Hesse—Watercolors of Swiss landscapes from the collection of the Herman Hesse Museum in Montagnola, Switzerland, by the writer and poet (1877–1962) who took up painting at the age of 40; through 2/28. Donahue/Sosinski, 560 Broadway (226-1111).

Theo Hios—A survey honoring the artist's 90th birthday, including his early social-realist works from the thirties, visionary pieces, and later abstractions; through 3/7. Teller, 568 Broadway (941-7335).

Gillian Jagger—A monumental sculpture installation of stones and other objects from nature that has at its center a deer carcass the artist found on the road in upstate New York and then cast in clear resin; through 3/14. Kind, 136 Greene St. (925-1200).

Karlo Kacharava—Expressionistic drawings and paintings by this Georgian artist and art critic (1964–1994) who brought together Moscow and Tbilisi artistic circles; 2/26–4/4. Goldstein, 39 Wooster St. (431-0314).

Y.Z. Kami/Daisuke Nakayama—An installation of painted portraits of men and women that suggests a memorial hall from an ancient world/An installation of a café reduced to its most elemental components. Through 3/14. Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. (343-7300).

Paul Laffoley—Recent paintings and prints of diagrams for imaginary systems; through 3/7. Kent, 67 Prince St. (966-4500).

Sang Nam Lee—Minimal paintings of concentric circles that appear to advance and recede within the picture plane; through 3/7. Wimmer, 560 Broadway (274-0274).

Lee Lozano—Paintings from the sixties of cartoonlike figures, through 2/28, at Mitchell Algus, 25 Thompson St. (966-1758); monumental paintings of tools made after 1964, through 5/1, at Rosen & van Liere, 362 W. Broadway (925-5425), and later minimal paintings, through 3/14, at Roeder, 545 Broadway (925-6098).

Matthew McCaslin—New works that center themselves thematically around the blur of urban light and its impact on the conscious and unconscious states of mind; through 3/7. Gering, 476 Broome St. (226-8195).

Feng Mengbo—Paintings, CD-ROMs, and collages by a Beijing artist; through 3/21. Solomon, 172 Mercer St. (941-5777).

Matt Mullican—Forty-three paintings generated from the taxonomy of a nineteenth-century encyclopedia, and a video and recent multiples; through 3/28. Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (925-4338).

John Okulick—New wood sculptures and charcoal drawings; through 3/11. Hoffman, 429 W. Broadway (966-6676).

Elizabeth Olbert—Painted freestanding objects and wall-mounted pieces that take New England as their focus; 2/26–4/4. Golden, 39 Wooster St. (274-0080).

Rebecca Quaytman—Recent paintings, including portraits and abstract works; through 3/14. Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. (334-3455).

Marina Rosenfeld—An installation of video, photography, and a limited-edition record that represents the first two parts of an eight-part work called *Fragment Opera*; through 3/14. Marcus, 578 Broadway (226-3200).

Christy Rupp—An installation of sculpture titled *Dirty Work* on the theme of viruses and bacteria; through 3/21. TZ'Art, 28 Wooster St. (966-9059).

Edgar Sanchez—Paintings of solitary figures against empty landscapes or imaginary cityscapes; through 3/5. Perlow, 560 Broadway (941-1220).

Kenny Scharf—New paintings, polychrome sculptures, and a freestanding unique environment made up of hundreds of painted toys and found objects; through 3/14. Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. (274-9300).

Bonell Silverman—Canvases that combine elements of expressionism and color-field painting, by a Houston-based artist; through 3/21. Steele, 420 W. (941-8388).

E. E. Smith/Sarah Leahy—Photographic oil prints of landscapes/Paintings made with black ink on Plexiglas. Through 3/7. Foster, 62 Crosby St. (966-9024).

Rudolph Steiner—Blackboard drawings that were the visual component to Steiner's lectures given between 1919 and 1924; through 3/21. Blum, 99 Wooster St. (343-0441).

Richard Tuttle—New mixed-media wall pieces that continue the artist's investigation of the perceptive and cognitive boundaries of the visual field; through 3/21. Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (431-3685).

Andy Warhol—Part II of a two-part exhibition of unique screenprints that have not been previously exhibited; through 3/14. Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (226-3232).

Andy Warhol—Fifteen abstract paintings that were produced in 1962 and have not been previously exhibited; through 3/21. Kern, 558 Broadway (965-1706).

Chelsea

Renée Cox—Large-scale color photographs of the artist as a comic-strip character; through 3/28. Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. (206-0297).

Keith Edmier—Sculptures based on the artist's reconstructed childhood memories and fixations; through 3/7. Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. (206-7100).

Jack Featherly—New paintings that combine elements of minimalism, abstraction, and Pop Art; through 3/14. Team, 527 W. 26th St. (279-9219).

Graham Gillmore—Paintings in polyurethane and oil paint on masonite of mysterious organic forms in a laboratory-like space; through 3/14. Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. (627-3930).

Ken Grimes—Black-and-white paintings that combine abstract designs and text; through 3/14. Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. (627-5117).

Robert Grosvenor/John McLaughlin—A new large-scale sculpture that refers to architecture and vernacular building, and related works on paper/A selection of paintings by the West Coast abstractionist (1898–1976). Through 3/21. Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. (255-1105).

Matt Harle/Carie Lassman—New sculptures of Hydrocal, cast rubber, and foam installation that are simultaneously anthropomorphic and architectural/New paintings. Through 3/14. Eller, 529 W. 20th St. (206-6411).

Pello Irazu—Wall paintings, drawings, three-dimensional objects, sound, and sculpture that explore the tension between private and public domains; through 3/21. Weber, 529 W. 20th St. (691-5711).

Alain Kirili—Three sculptures from the artist's ongoing *Commandments* series; through 3/28. Marlborough Chelsea, 211 W. 19th St. (463-8634).

Patty Martori—New sculptures and works on paper; through 3/14. D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. (352-9460).

Matthew McCaslin—Recent video sculptures; through 3/7. Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. (929-0500).

Ross Rudel—Recent sculpture; through 3/7. Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. (645-1701).

Jane Schiowitz/Claudia Roberts and Thomas Weaver—New abstract paintings depicting loosely repeated patterns/A collaborative installation of an oversized staircase. Through 2/28. Harris, 529 W. 20th St. (463-9666).

Cindy Tower—An installation titled *Pirate Cindy* that encompasses seascapes, rum bottles, and a pickup truck transformed into a pirate ship; through 3/14. Trans Hudson, 416 W. 13th St. (242-3232).

John Wesley—A selection of paintings and works on paper from 1968 to 1997; through 3/21. Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. (633-6555).

Betty Woodman—Recent ceramic sculptures based on specific works by Picasso and Matisse, and works in glass; through 2/28. Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. (633-6999).

Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

Berry-Hill—11 E. 70th St. (744-2300). "From Sacred to Sensual: Italian Paintings, 1400 to 1750," with works by Bellini, Canaletto, Tintoretto, Titian, others; through 3/14.

China Institute—125 E. 65th St. (627-4424). "Scent of Ink," 50 masterworks of Chinese painting, with hand scrolls, hanging scrolls, and album leaves; through 6/20.

Davis & Langdale—231 E. 60th St. (838-0333). "20th Century Works on Paper," by Atget, Bell, Bellows, Bevan, others; through 3/7.

Graham—1014 Madison Ave. (535-5767). Abstract and representational drawings by 28 artists, among them Africano, Arm, Bocchino, Bovasso; 1/29—3/7.

Hunter College—695 Park Ave. (772-4991). "Roots & Reeds: The Amazing Grace of the Gullah People;" through 3/21.

Mitchell-Innes & Nash—1018 Madison Ave. (744-7400). "Inner Self," with works by Duchamp, Giacometti, Gober, Quinn, others; through 3/13.

Sculpture Center—167 E. 69th St. (879-3500). "Seeing & Believing," with works by Fox, Grimmer, Hendee, Lindberg, others; through 3/24.

57th Street Area

Equitable Gallery—787 Seventh Ave. (554-4818), Mon.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. 12–5. "The Dutch in the Americas, 1600–1800," with rare prints, maps, and illustrated books from the John Carter Brown Library; through 4/4.

Littlejohn—41 E. 57th St. (980-2323). "A Common Thread," with works by Chang, Haub, Haynes, Thomas; through 3/14.

Rosenfeld—24 W. 57th St. (247-0082). Twentieth-century masterworks by African-American artists Alston, Catlett, Delaney, Gilliam, others; through 3/22.

SoHo and TriBeCa

Art in General—79 Walker St. (219-0473). "Scale, Relatively Speaking," with works by Abrahamson, Andrus, Burns, Engler, others; through 4/4.

Bravin Post Lee—476 Broome St. (727-9809). "Recovering Lost Fictions: Caravaggio's 'Musicians,' " work by Gilje and Grigely exploring the way we authenticate and value works of fine art; through 3/14.

Exit Art/The First World—548 Broadway (966-7745). "WILD," an exhibition of the work of Brody, Closson, Cohen, Currie, and others, exploring the boundaries of traditional media; through 3/15.

Feature—76 Greene St. (941-7077). Works by Harrison, Lazarus, Linn, Robbins, Wurtz, others; through 3/28.

Lombard/Freid—470 Broome St. (334-5060). "Dissin' the Real," with works by Gursky, Hutchings, Hybert, Kneffel, others; through 3/21.

Stendhal—386 W. Broadway (334-4649). An exploration of the grotesque in photography, paintings, and sculpture, with works by Serrano, Paladino, Dine, Rauschenberg, others; through 3/22.

Zwirner—43 Greene St. (966-9074). Sculpture, photography and drawings by Douglas, Khedoori, McCracken, Rhoades, others; through 3/14.

Chelsea

DCA—525 W. 22nd St. (255-5511). Architectonic sculptures and color photographs by Jensen, paintings by Bonifaci, and paintings and collage by Tal R; through 2/28.

Greene Naftali—526 W. 26th St. (463-7770). "Super Freaks: Post Pop & the New Generation;" through 4/18.

Kreps—529 W. 20th St. (741-8849). "I Hate Movies," works by Bag, Borgese, Burr, Goldman; through 2/28.

Marks—523 W. 24th St. (243-0200). "Maverick," new sculpture, photography, drawing, painting, and video from Bustamante, Fischli, Fritsch, Horn, others; through 4/11.

Morris—465 W. 23rd St. (727-2752). "Portraits," with works by Beck, Fowler, Keita, Moffatt; through 2/28.

Other

Forbes—62 Fifth Ave. (209-5549). "Art from Scotland," an exhibition of contemporary paintings by traditional and avant-garde artists; through 3/21.

La MaMa—6 E. 1st St. (505-2476). "Think Pink!" An exploration of the color and its connotations, with works by Berry, Bidlo, Broaddus, Cohan, others; through 3/15.

Photography

Marta María Pérez Bravo—Manipulated and fragmented images of the artist's body; through 3/14. Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. (223-1059).

Thomas Joshua Cooper—Photographs of rivers in America and Scotland that reduce landscape to its most minimal and abstract elements; through 3/14. Kelly, 43 Mercer St. (343-2405).

Generous Miracles—529 W. 20th St. (352-2858). Conceptual photographs by eleven artists of Cuban origin; through 3/31.

Lois Guarino—Platinum palladium photographs of historical objects and Russian icons that incorporate gold and silver leafing, painting, and other media; through 3/14. Mann, 43 E. 76th St. (570-1223).

Jindrich Heisler—Surrealist photomontages and manipulated photographs by the Czech poet and artist (1914–1953); through 4/4. Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. (794-4444).

ICP—1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777), Tues. 11–8 (voluntary contribution 6–8), Wed.–Sun. 11–6; $5.50, $4 students and seniors. "Micha Bar-Am: An Israeli Photobiography." Images of life in Israel by its premier photojournalist; through 5/31.

ICP Midtown—1133 Avenue of the Americas, at 43rd St. (860-1777), Tues. 11–8 (6–8 admission by voluntary contribution), Wed.–Sun. 11–6; $5.50, $4 seniors and students. "Weegee's World: Life, Death, and the Human Drama." A retrospective of more than 200 images by the legendary tabloid-news photographer; through 3/8.

Luis Mallo—Black-and-white photographs of subway passengers in New York City; through 3/14. Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. (627-4819).

Rose Marasco—Images of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century domestic items used by women; through 3/7. Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave. (242-7767).

Florio Puenter—Black-and-white photographs taken in Havana between 1993–94; through 3/28. Baron/Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St. (581-9191).

Sarah Rossiter—Color photographs of the artist with images of her mother's paintings projected onto her body; through 3/28. Erben, 476 Broome St. (966-5283).

Thomas Ruff—Photomontages that suggest propaganda posters and incorporate collected images that have been manipulated by computer; through 3/28. 303, 525 W. 22nd St. (255-1121).

Roberto Schezen—Photographs depicting Greek Revival statues of male athletes that were erected in Rome in the thirties under Mussolini's direction; through 3/14. Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. (750-7070).

Patrick T. Sellitto—Photographs of well-known and obscure sculptures around the world; through 3/21. Gearhart, 252 Mott St. (966-3556).

Silverstein—476 Broome St. (226-0640). Photographs by Christina Dimitriadis, Sarah Dobai, and Roberto Marossi; through 3/14.

Paul Strand—Photographs that Strand took of his garden during the final years of his life at his home in Orgeval, France, many of which have not been previously exhibited or published; through 4/4. Aperture's Burden Gallery, 20 E. 23rd St. (505-5555).

Burk Uzzle—Photographs documenting Daytona Bike Week over the past 25 years; through 3/14. Leica, 670 Broadway (777-3051).

Jocko Weyland—Large Cibachrome photographs of corporate interiors; through 3/14. Martz, 529 W. 20th St. (206-3686).

Witkin—415 W. Broadway (925-5510). Photographs depicting various aspects of Italy by Angelo Lomeo and Sonja Bullaty, Linda Butler, and Leonard Sussman; through 3/14.

Museums

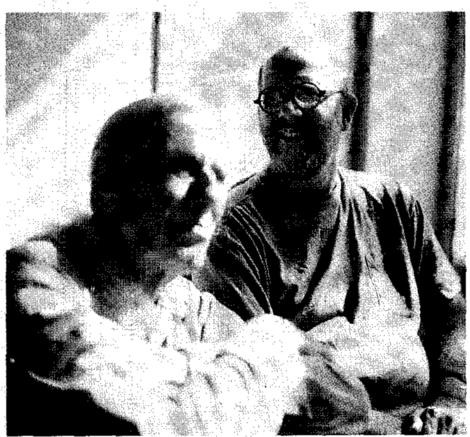
American Craft Museum—"Paper + Finland = Art." Works on paper by contemporary Finnish artists; through 3/22. . . . "Expressions in Wood: Masterworks From the Wornick Collection." Turned and shaped wood artworks by 56 artists from the United States, Europe, and Australia, drawn from the collection of Anita and Ron Wornick; through 3/22. 40 W. 53rd St. (956-3535); Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 10–6, Thurs. till 8 (pay as you wish 6–8); $5, $2.50 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History—"Sacred Mountains of the World." Color photographs of revered mountains around the world; through 3/31. . . .

Retrospective

Talking Pictures

Back in 1968, when SoHo was a truckers' mecca, Chuck Close decided to do something he'd never seen before: paint large-scale, brutally realistic portraits of his family and friends, most of whom were unknown artists like himself. Three decades later, Close's larger-than-life faces—many of whom have since become household names—are about to go on view at MoMA in "Chuck Close," the 57-year-old artist's first full-scale retrospective (February 26 through May 26). But what do Close's subjects, known in his paintings simply as *Bill, Judy, Elizabeth,* or *Cindy,* have to say for themselves? The possibility of revealing the lives behind the paintings so intrigued Bill Bartman, founder and publisher of A.R.T. Press, that he approached Close about doing a book of conversations with his subjects. "We'd already worked with Chuck on a previous book [a discussion between Close and the painter Vija Celmins]," says Bartman, "and this was a unique opportunity to create a history of late-twentieth-century American art in the artists' own voices." *The Portraits Speak: Chuck Close in Conversation With 27 of His Subjects* (A.R.T. Press; $49.95) took six years to make, with Close and Bartman conducting most of the interviews in Close's New York studio. But instead of sticking to the book's intended theme—asking the subjects what they thought of their images—Close says he was more interested in creating biographical portraits of the artists, "whether that person was the 93-year-old Paul Cadmus [left, with Close] or someone much younger than me, like Lorna Simpson or Kiki Smith." Most of the conversations focus on the artists' early careers—in the case of Cadmus, a time long before Close was born. "One of the funniest moments took place during our conversation with Paul," says Close. "He'd told us he didn't know anyone in the art world and then he started talking about someone called Eddie. It turned out that Eddie was Edward Hopper." In many ways, Close's project is just beginning: "I'm still painting and there are a lot of people I want to paint," he says. "But that will have to be volume two." EDITH NEWHALL



Photograph by Jack Pierson.

"The Nature of Diamonds." An exhibition exploring all aspects of the mineral, from its geological origins to its place in history, art, adornment, and literature, featuring significant gems from around the world; through 4/26. . . . "Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897–1902." A commemoration of the American Museum of Natural History's Jesup North Pacific Expedition of 1897–1902, including approximately 100 archival photographs of scenes from daily life; through 5/31. Central Park West at 79th St. (769-5100); Sun.–Thurs. 10–5:45, Fri. and Sat. 10–8:45; $8 suggested contribution, $6 students and seniors, $4.50 children.

Asia Society—"Great Cities, Small Treasures: The Ancient World of the Indus Valley." Over 100 examples of sculpture, ceramics, metalwork, seals, and other artifacts made by inhabitants of the Indus River Valley between 2600 B.C.E. and 1900 B.C.E., drawn primarily from collections in Pakistan; through 5/3. 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-ASIA), Tues.–Sat. 11–6, Sun. 12–5, Thurs. 11–8 (6–8 free admission); $4, $2 seniors and students.

Bronx Museum of the Arts—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966–1996." A survey of Black British art that is being held in collaboration with the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center (see photography listings) and the Studio Museum in Harlem; through 3/15. . . . "The Picnic: An Installation by Ernesto Pujol"; through 3/15. 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx (718-681-6000), Wed. 3–9, Thurs. and Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 1–6; $3 suggested donation; $2 students; $1 senior citizens, children under 12 free.

Brooklyn Museum of Art—"Scattered Petals, Fallen Leaves, Shards of Glass: The Work of Bing Hu, Working in Brooklyn." An exhibition of sixteen sculptures that incorporate material found on the streets of Brooklyn by the Chinese artist; through 5/10. 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. 11–9, Sun. 11–6; $4, $2 students, $1.50 seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum Smithsonian Institution—"The Jewels of Lalique." A retrospective of jewelry by the French art Nouveau artist-designer; through 4/12. . . . "Arquitectonica: The Times Square Project." The first New York exhibition of photographs, models, and drawings by the Miami-based architectural firm, highlighting its plans for a hotel, entertainment, and retail complex at 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue; through 5/10. 2 E. 91st St. (849-8300), Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 12–5, Tues. 10–9 (free admission 5–9); $3, $1.50 seniors and students.

Dia Center for the Arts—"Tracey Moffatt: *Free-falling*." A group of 25 photographs and a video installation by the Australian artist and filmmaker; through 6/14. . . . "Richard Serra: *Torqued Ellipses*." Three monumental sculptures of Cor-Ten steel that explore the shaping of space rather than material as their primary subject; through 6/14. . . . "Dan Flavin: 1962/63, 1970, 1996." Three installations using fluorescent light and six separate fluorescent works by the late sculptor; through 6/14. 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912), Thurs.–Sun. 12–6; $4, $2 students and seniors.

El Museo del Barrio—"Diamantina Gonzalez: Recurrent Memories." A site-specific installation about the relationship between time, space, and memory; through 3/29. . . . "Taíno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture From the Caribbean." The first comprehensive survey of the art of the Taíno, the dominant culture in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Bahamas from about 1200 A.D. to the arrival of Columbus in 1492; through 5/3. . . . "Brian Nissen, Chinampas: A Vision of the Floating Gardens of Xochimilco." Bronze, ceramic, and wood sculpture and mixed-media assemblages based on the form of *chinampas,* artificial islands originally created by the Aztecs for agricultural purposes; through 3/29. 1230 Fifth Ave. (831-7272); Wed.–Sun. 11–5, Thurs. 12–7; $4, $2 seniors and students.

Frick Collection—"Robert Adam, The Creative Mind: From the Sketch to the Finished Drawing." Sixty-six drawings and watercolors by the renowned eighteenth-century architect Robert Adam, his brother and partner, James, and artists employed in their office that were selected from the 9,000 Adam drawings acquired by Sir John Soane in 1833; through 4/5. 1 E. 70th St. (288-0700); Tues.–Sat. 10–6, Sun. 1–6; $5, $3 students and seniors; children under 10 not admitted.

Grey Art Gallery—"Shiro Kuramata, 1934–1991." A retrospective of the Japanese designer's furniture; 2/25. 100 Washington Square East (998-6780), Wed. 11–8, Tues., Thurs., Fri. 11–6, Sat. 11–5; $2.50 suggested donation.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum—"China: 5,000 Years." More than 500 artworks and artifacts from seventeen provinces of China; through 6/3. . . . "After *Mountains and Sea*: Frankenthaler 1956–1959." A survey of the artist's early paintings, including her groundbreaking *Mountains and Sea* of 1952, which laid the stylistic groundwork for her subsequent works; through 5/3. . . . "Visions of Paris: Robert Delauney's Series." An exhibition focusing on the artist's series paintings of Saint-Séverin, the Eiffel Tower, and Paris as seen through his window; 2/27–5/24. . . . 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (423-3500); Sun.–Wed. 10–6, Fri. and Sat. 10–8 (Fri. 6–8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $12, $7 seniors and students.

Guggenheim Museum SoHo—"China: 5,000 Years"; through 5/25. 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500), Sun. and Wed.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. 11–8 (6–8 pay what you wish); $8, $5 seniors and students.

Jewish Museum—"Still More Distant Journeys: The Artistic Emigrations of Lasar Segall." The first major United States retrospective of the preeminent Brazilian artist (1891–1957) who was a major contributor to the development of German Expressionism and and Brazilian modernist painting; Through 5/10. . . . ASSIGNMENT: RESCUE, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee." The story behind the 1940–41 rescue mission undertaken by Varian Fry, a New York–based Frenchman who arranged safe passage out of France for many anti-Nazi artists, writers, scientists, and political refugees; through 3/29. . . . "Blackbird, blackbird." An installation by Kristin Oppenheim that is the first exhibition of the museum's Contemporary Artist Projects series; through 3/15. 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (423-3200); Sun., Mon., Wed., Thurs. 11–5:45, Tues. 11–8 (Tues. after 5; free); $7, $5 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art—"Augustin Pajou, Royal Sculptor." The first comprehensive exhibition of the work of the eighteenth-century French sculptor; 2/26–5/24. . . . "Conversion by Candlelight: The Four Magdalens by Georges de la Tour." Four full-length paintings of Mary Magdalene seated before a mirror, her profile illuminated by candlelight; through 3/15. . . . "The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part I: Calligraphy." An exhibition surveying the development of Islamic calligraphy; through 6/28. . . . "When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles in the Metropolitan and Cleveland Museums of Art"; 3/3–5/17. . . . "Evocative Fragments." A selection of twentieth-century paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs depicting fragments of the human body; through 6/14. . . . "Gianni Versace." A tribute to the late designer that reveals the influence of art on his fashion and theater designs; through 3/22. . . . "Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era"; through 3/1. . . . "Master Hand: Individuality and Creativity Among Yoruba Sculptors." Masks, free-standing figures, containers, and architectural posts by male and female Yoruba masters who were active from the mid-nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth century; through 3/1. 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (879-5500); Tues.–Thurs. and Sun. 9:30–5:15, Fri. and Sat. 9:30–9; $8 contribution, $4 children and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (923-3700); Tues.–Sun. 9:30–4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $8, $4 seniors and students.

Museum at F.I.T.—"Norman Norell." The first retrospective of the American designer (1900–1972) known for his tailoring perfection; through 4/18. . . . "Toledo/Toledo: A Marriage of Art and Fashion." Approximately 100 pieces of clothing designed by Isabel Toledo, and paintings, fashion illustrations, sketches, sculptures, and mannequins by her husband, Ruben Toledo; through 4/25. Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5966), Tues.–Fri. 12–8, Sat. 10–5; free.

Museum for African Art—"African Faces, African Figures: The Arman Collection." African sculptures from the collection of the sculptor Armand P. Arman; through 4/19. 593 Broadway, bet. Houston and Prince Sts. (966-1313), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5:30, Sat. and Sun. 12–6; $5, $2.50 seniors, students, and children.

Museum of American Folk Art—"A.G. Rizzoli: Architect of Magnificent Visions." A survey of architectural drawings, illuminated poems, and visionary writings by the San Francisco architectural draftsman (1896–1981); through 3/8. 2 Lincoln Square (595-9533), Tues.–Sun. 11:30–7:30; free.

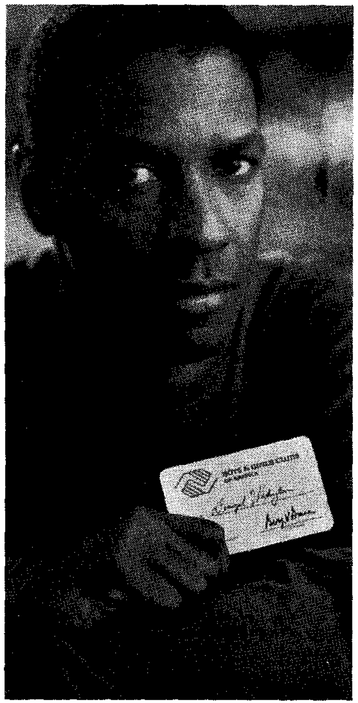
Museum of Modern Art—"Chuck Close." A retrospective of paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs by the American artist known for his monumental, psychologically charged portraits of artists and anonymous sitters; 2/26–5/26. . . . "Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism." The first United States retrospective of the works of the renowned Finnish architect, designer, and town planner, including sketches and competition drawings, models, new and archival photographs, and examples of furniture and glass; through 5/19. . . . "Fernand Léger." A retrospective of paintings and drawings by the French artist (1881–1955) from his early series "Contrastes de Formes (1913–14)," the first fully abstract works to emerge from Cubism, through his last realist paintings of construction workers of the late forties and early fifties; through 5/12. . . . "Fabrications." An exhibition developed jointly by MOMA, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Wexner Center for the Arts, comprising a total of twelve installations simultaneously constructed at all three venues by architects and architectural teams; through 4/28. 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480); Sat.–Tues. 10:30–6, Thurs. 10:30–6, Fri. 10:30–8:30 (4:30–8:30 pay what you wish), closed Wed.; $9.50, $6.50 students and seniors.

Museum of the City of New York—"Bridging New York." An exhibition of paintings, prints, drawings, postcards, and vintage photographs exploring the role played by bridges in the creation of Greater New York; through 6/28. . . . "New York From Above: An Aerial View." Paintings depicting aerial views of the city by Spelman Evans Downer; through 6/14. . . . "Beyond the Grave: Cultures of Queens Cemeteries." Photographs of cemeteries in Queens taken by Dr. Ilana Harlow; through 3/8. 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (534-1672); Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 1–5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

National Academy Museum & School of the Fine Arts—"Fair & Free: Images of Childhood, 1827–1992." Paintings, works on paper, and sculptures depicting children; through 3/8. . . . "Stages of Creation: Public Sculpture by National Academicians." Models for public sculpture by Louise Bourgeois, Neil Estern, Marisol, Tom Otterness, Tony Rosenthal, and others; through 3/8. 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St. (369-4880); Wed.–Sun. 12–5 (Fri. until 8); $5, $3.50 seniors, students, and children under 16.

National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Institution—"Memory and Imagination: The Legacy of Maidu Indian Artist Frank Day." Works by the first self-taught Native American painter in California to depict customs of his tribe; through 5/3. George Gustav Heye Center, 1 Bowling Green (514-3888), 10–5 daily, Thurs. to 8; free.

New York Public Library—"A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Basement Publishing in New York City and Elsewhere." An exhibition focusing on the writers, artists, publishers, and communities who produced publications associated with the use of the mimeograph machine from the sixties through the early eighties; through 5/30. . . . "The Romanovs: Their Empire, Their Books." A selection of illustrated books that were originally in the collections of the Romanovs, the dynasty that ruled the Moscow Tsardom and the Russian Empire for 300 years until the Russian Revolution of 1917, and were acquired by the New York Public Library from the Soviet government in the twenties and thirties; through 2/28. . . . "Subject Matters: Photography, Romana Javitz, and the New York Public Library." The story of the visionary curator Romana Javitz, who during her 39-year tenure



Denzel Washington

Put this card in the hands of a child and there'll be no room for a gun. A needle. Or a knife.

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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA

The Positive Place For Kids

Solotaroff *continued from page 21*

mile walk from the D train to his office never seems to get any less terrifying. We always go out for a good expense-account meal on Arthur Avenue, then wander through the neighborhoods he loves until the small hours: the blowsy grandeur of Crotona Park, the pathetic attempts at commercialism on Third Avenue, the firebombed surrealism of Quarry Road. On my last visit, I tell him I've fallen in love with the stock market, crass as that may seem, particularly with following stocks on charts. His eyes light up.

"What sites do you use for charting?" he asks, unlocking a Powertool strongbox he uses as a safe. He takes out an old Compaq computer with a modem. His browser bookmarks include a number of financial sites. "You follow Worldcom?" he asks.

"You invest in the market?"

"No, I'm challenging their takeover of MCI," he says. There isn't a hint of irony in his voice. I ask him when Worldcom started redlining.

"Nahh," he says, his leg starting to shake. "Telecommunications Act of 1996," he says. "Great body of law, opens up a great window for challenges. Like Paul Simon says, can't be a one-trick pony. WorldCom's No. 2; MCI's No. 4. That's antitrust."

Turns out he's already won his first Telecommunications Act challenge, having taken on Sumner Redstone and Viacom last May when they tried to unload twelve radio stations. "Z100, Lite-FM. You'd think they'd hire fairly, right? Nope. One rock-and-roll station, WAXQ, had 45 employees, not one nonwhite." Viacom and the purchaser fought Lee bitterly, but with $1.2 billion at stake, they eventually settled for commitments to hire minorities, broadcast a public-affairs show, reduce advertising rates for South Bronx and upper-Manhattan businesses, create internships for local high-school students, etc.

"How did it compare to a CRA challenge?"

"Exactly the same. You call, they kick you from person to person. One tells you, 'Take your time.' The other one tells you, 'It's too late.' One tells you, 'It's very difficult—get a lawyer.' I am a lawyer. Then we fight for six months. That fight was pretty unpleasant."

I look at the stacks of paper filling the dark, airless office, and think about the rat that starved to death in here. There's easily a ton of paper here, maybe more. He's pored over every scrap of it. "Don't these fights ever wear you down?"

"No," he says, "they give me energy, actually." His leg begins to shake under the table. "Gotta go for the gusto." ■

(1929–1968), built the Picture Collection at the New York Public Library into a world-renowned resource of documentary photography; through 3/28. Fifth Ave. and 42nd St. (869-8089); Mon. 10–6, Tues.–Wed. 11–6, Thurs.–Sat. 10–6; free.

New York Transit Museum—"50 Years of the Subway Sun." Posters from the "Sunday Sun" poster series that were created for the Interborough Rapid Transit Company between 1910 and the early sixties; through 3/22. Boerum Place and Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn Heights (718-243-8601), Tues.–Fri. 10–4, Sat. and Sun. 12–5; $3, $1.50 students and seniors (free for seniors every Wed. from 12–4).

New-York Historical Society—"Signs and Wonders: The Spectacular Lights of Times Square." A look at the development of technology and imagery in Times Square's advertising signage; through 3/8. 2 W. 77th St. (873-3400); Wed.–Sun. noon–5; $5, $3 seniors and children.

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center—"Jack Smith: Flaming Creature"; through 3/1. . . . "John Coplans: A Self-Portrait"; through 3/29. . . . "Jackie Winsor: Sculpture"; through 4/12. . . . "Lynne Yamamoto: Selected Work"; through 3/1. . . . "10 Years Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany"; through 4/12. . . . "Matthew McCaslin, Susan Etkin, Michael Joo"; through 4/12. . . . "Installations/Projects—Siah Armajani, Per Barclay, Shane Cullen, and Philip Napier"; through 4/12. . . . "Vertical Painting Show"; through 6/28. 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave. (718-784-2084), Wed.–Sun. 12–6; $4 suggested donation, $2 students and seniors.

Pierpont Morgan Library—"A Seal Upon Thine Heart: Glyptic Art of the Ancient Near East. ca. 3500–2100 B.C." A selection of seals from the Library's collection and from the Yale Babylonian Collection, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and several private collections; through 4/26. . . . "To Observe and Imagine: British Drawings and Watercolors, 1600–1900"; through 5/3. 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5, Sat. 10:30–6; Sun. 12–6; $6; $4 students and seniors.

Studio Museum in Harlem—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966–1996." A survey of Black British art that is being held in collaboration with the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center (see photography listings) and the Bronx Museum of the Arts; through 3/15. 144 W. 125th St. (864-4500); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 1–6; $5, $3 seniors and students.

Whitney Museum of American Art—"Bill Viola." The first full-scale overview of the work of the California-based video artist, including 15 installations, 25 videotapes, and drawings and notebooks from the past 25 years; through 5/10. . . . "Arthur Dove: A Retrospective." Paintings, assemblages, pastels, and drawings by the pioneering American modernist; through 4/12. . . . "Collection in Context: 1948." A multimedia exhibition surveying important artwork, music, film, and news footage from that year; through 3/15. 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (570-3676); Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 11–6, Thurs. 1–8; $8, $7 students and seniors (free Thurs. 6–8).

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris—"*Garden of Qián*, by Ming Fay." A fantasy garden of tree and fruits handcrafted from paper, wire, synthetic fibers, and layers of polyurethane; through 4/17. 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550), Mon.–Sat. 11–6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's—502 Park Ave. (546-1000). Next sale on 3/10.

Christie's East—219 E. 67th St. (546-1000). 2/25 at 10: "Books." On view from 2/21.

Doyle—175 E. 87th St. (427-2730). 2/25 at 10: "Fine Furniture, Decorations & Paintings, and Decorative Asian Works of Art." On view from 2/21.

Sotheby's—1334 York Ave. at 72nd St. (606-7000). 2/26 at 10, 2, and 6:30, 2/27 at 10: "Windsor Collection." On view from 2/10. 3/3 at 10:15: "Stamps." On view from 2/28.

Swann Galleries—104 E. 25th St. (254-4710). 2/26 at 10:30: "Printed & Manuscript African-Americana, Works of Art, Slave Artifacts." On view from 2/21.

restaurants

Chinese Immigrant...A Little Gnocchi

Manhattan

Lower New York

A.J.'s Niota—This casual Indian duplex makes for a nice diversion from SoHo's French-and-Italian-restaurant stranglehold. The downstairs bar and upstairs dining room are ornately decorated with carved wood and silver doors, and the menu features whole tandoori fish, lots of vegetarian options, and weekend brunch. *337 W. Broadway (431-6222). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Alison on Dominick—An impeccably turned-out room with blue banquettes and tender lighting. Perfectionist owner Alison Becker Hurt makes sure that all is well. *38 Dominick St., nr. Hudson St. (727-1188). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Arqua—Traditional Northern Italian fare—think homemade pastas, octopus salad, Venetian shellfish soup—served in a dining room that is as spare and elegant as downtown gets. Watch out: The big guy in the apron is an aspiring tenor disguised as a waiter, and he's been known to break into conversation-stopping song without warning. Owner Leo Pulito has an impressive wine cellar. *281 Church St. (334-1888). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Bo Ky—This very basic Chinatown spot has been dishing up delicious noodle soups to the neighborhood since before the Mees and Tang Tangs sprouted uptown. Expect to share a table. *80 Bayard St. (406-2292). (I) ($).*

Cellar in the Sky—This oenophile's dream changes its menu, and its well-chosen wine pairings, monthly; the one constant is the spectacular view. Four courses of creatively prepared, seasonal American fare costs $60, and the flights of three wines begin at $35. Lately, offerings have included a chili-grilled blue-prawn salad with mango marmalade and Cuba libre spices, roasted pheasant with spinach gnocchi, and a trio of Sonoma bottlings. Jacket required; love of heights recommended. *1 World Trade Center (524-7000). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Chanterelle—Spare and elegant, virtually religious, this TriBeCa restaurant is a favorite among those who want a Big Deal. Chef David Waltuck runs a grand kitchen—seafood sausage, cold fruit soups, and anything he does with truffles in season. Wife Karen runs the front room with class and warmth. *2 Harrison St., at Hudson St. (966-6960). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Kelley and Ping—The type of funky, lofty noodle house that could only exist—and thrive—in SoHo. *127 Greene St., nr. Prince St. (228-1212). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Layla—A Middle Eastern feast, complete with gyrating belly dancer, brought to you by Drew Nieporent and his TriBeCa production team. Menu highlights include crabmeat phyllo, cinnamon-braised lamb shank with okra, and toasted couscous and almond ice milk. *211 W. Broadway, at Franklin St. (431-0700). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Montrachet—Owner Drew Nieporent now has five places in New York, including Nobu, Layla, Zeppole at the TriBakery, and Tribeca Grill, and another in San Francisco. But this is his baby—attractive, lively, and one of the first truly great restaurants in lower Manhattan. There's lunch on Fridays—try the Roquefort-and-pear salad—and dinner Monday through Saturday. *239 W. Broadway, nr. White St. (219-2777). (E) AE only.*

Morton's of Chicago—The second New York location of the national steakhouse chain. Portions are huge, quality is consistent, and, in case you haven't noticed, beef is back. *90 West St. (732-5665). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Nobu—The great Nobu Matsuhisa—actually, he's young, good-looking, and incredibly hip—has arrived in TriBeCa. And New Yorkers haven't tasted Japanese cooking like this—unless, of course, they've visited Matsuhisa's restaurant in L.A. *105 Hudson St. (219-0500). (E) AE, MC, V.*

The Odeon—Downtown has fallen in love all over again with this TriBeCa institution. The bar's out of Dashiell Hammett, and the dining room gets everyone from the banker, his wife, and their 2-year-old to movie stars, artists, and assorted big-deal celebrities. *145 W. Broadway, nr. Thomas St. (233-0507). (M) AE, MC, V.*

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Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *109 Spring St. (274-8883). Also, 240 Columbus Ave., at 71st St. (769-3988). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Pierino—An Italian dining room full of businesspeople and city politicians for lunch and dinner for the bankers on their way uptown offering meta-traditional dishes like lobster and steak. Yes, that was Peter Vallone. *107 Reade St. (513-0610). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Provence—Lots of people have got engaged in the charming garden at this authentic country French restaurant; even more have sampled the bourride, bouillabaisse, and bass flambé. If you can't actually make it to the Côte d'Azur, this is the next best thing. *38 MacDougal St. (475-7500). (M–E) AE.*

Raoul's—The dull roar in this cavelike bistro—aging gracefully amid the high-strung Thoroughbreds of SoHo's restaurant racetrack—is a heartwarming sound. *180 Prince St., nr. Thompson St. (966-3518). (M) AE, MC, V.*

SoHo Kitchen and Bar—Grape nuts celebrate the 96-spigot Cruvinet, ordering flights of Cabernets or seven Pinot Noirs to taste and compare, but SoHo neighbors love it, too—for all those beers on tap, for the thin-crust pizza, for a glance at the game on the TV overhead. *103 Greene Street., nr. Prince St. (925-1866). (I) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Tennessee Mountain—This 1807 landmark farmhouse serves up huge portions of smoked chicken and grilled ribs, plus regional appetizers and desserts. Bring those breath mints and Handi-Wipes for a $17.95 all-you-can-eat on Monday night. *143 Spring St. (431-3993). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Tribeca Grill—Though this spacious, brick-walled restaurant sometimes serves as canteen for the film execs (and movie stars) in offices upstairs, the creative American cuisine and lively bar scene make it a popular downtown destination. Known for its roasted meats and fish specials. *375 Greenwich St., at Franklin St. (941-3900). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Wall Street Club—Until April, this third-floor annex of Wall Street Kitchen & Bar serves only lunch. If you have anything to celebrate, do: Ten vintages of Dom Pérignon are available by the glass. The modern American menu features comte ravioli, oyster pan roast, and bacon-wrapped brook trout with spaetzle. *70 Broad St. (797-9500). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Wall Street Kitchen & Bar—As downtown grows more and more residential, its halls of finance, like this former bank building, are being converted into service establishments. This sister of SoHo Kitchen & Bar offers a similarly extensive selection of beers

ASK GAEL

I want a cheap bite before the $3 movie.

Fatina is strictly low-frill, and the mixed grill can be dry (perhaps precooked?). But give me the vegetarian combo platter to stuff into warmed pita for just six bucks and I'm happy. Baba ghannouj and hummus are primed with sesame tahini, and the tabbouleh is properly more parsley than bulgur. Toss in a few chickpeas, a decent roll of rice-stuffed grape leaf, a sensational falafel—both crunchy and crumbly—and garnish with greens. Deeply, cheaply satisfying. Sandwiches start at $2.50. (404 West 49th Street; 975-9564.)

Photographs by Robert Wright.

and wines by the glass, plus such eclectic American fare as beer-braised short ribs with egg noodles, and pizza topped with shrimp, smoked bacon, and roasted tomatoes. *70 Broad St. (797-7070). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Windows on the World—Chef Michael Lomonaco, formerly of the '21' Club, has landed at this landmark restaurant known for what may be the most spectacular view of Manhattan Island. His new menu focuses on sophisticated renditions of American food, including skillet-roasted bluepoint oysters with sweet shallot-caviar cream; open raviolo of forest mushrooms, pumpkin, and sage; and Maine lobster with truffles, root vegetables, and buttermilk biscuits. Be sure to take advantage of the restaurant's superlative wine cellar. *1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (524-7000). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Below 14th Street, East

Gotham Bar & Grill—Alfred Portale's kitchen, with its architectural ingenuity and whimsical creativity, serves as a finishing school for the city's all-star chefs before they launch their own careers. This awesome dining temple has long been a staple. *12 E. 12th St. (620-4020). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Haveli—Haveli distinguishes itself from the Sixth Street strip, for its food as much as its upscale decor. Possibly the only East Village restaurant with an *intentionally* shattered windowpane. *100 Second Ave., nr. 6th St. (982-0533). (I–M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Knickerbocker Bar and Grill—A subdued steakhouse with vintage items on the walls—Hirschfelds, copies of the *Saturday Evening Post*, and nineteenth-century curios. A sophisticated combination of gastronomics and history. *33 University Pl., at E. 9th St. (228-8490). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Miracle Grill—One of the earliest pioneers on the East Village dining scene, this comfortable Mexican cantina is especially welcoming in warm weather, when the garden is a serene urban oasis. The grilled-vegetable plate surpasses most. *112 First Ave., nr. 7th St. (254-2353). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Osso Buco—Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and T-bone steak. *88 University Pl., nr. 11th St. (645-4525). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Three of Cups—Proving that the East Village has room enough for another wood-burning oven pizza parlor besides Two Boots. The "mickey," a charred spud dripping with butter, shouldn't be missed. *83 First Ave., at 5th St. (388-0059). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Below 14th Street, West

Andalousia—This relatively undiscovered Village Moroccan rightly prides itself on its roster of tagines and couscous specials. B'stilla is a standout. *28 Cornelia St. (929-3693). (I) MC, V.*

Bar Cichetti—Modeled after a typical bar in Venice, where patrons gather for a glass of wine—choose here among 50—and small snacks called *cichetti* (think Italian tapas). Sample among appetizer-size portions of rice balls, fried meatballs, frittatas, and crostini, or, should these snacks merely whet the appetite, have a full meal of pasta, chicken, fish or beef. Perfect for pre– or post–Film Forum noshing. *220 W. Houston St. (229-0314). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Bar Pitti—This Tuscan trattoria, with tables spilling out onto the sidewalk, has simpler, cheaper food than Da Silvano next door, but it's just as good a spot to sip an espresso and watch the Village foot traffic. Great fettunta. *268 Sixth Ave., nr. Bleecker St. (982-3300). (I–M) ($).*

Opening
The Private Sector

Politicians don't get a lot of privacy, especially in this covert-taping, e-mail-copying, special-investigating era. But Mr. K's, the luxurious Chinese restaurant in Washington, D.C., has made its fifteen-year reputation by affording that treasured commodity to the bipartisan ranks of politicos and K Street lobbyists who keep it in business. With oceans of space between tables, the elbows of regulars like Bob Dole and Al Gore remain decidedly unrubbed, even as they maneuver their personalized, gold-capped chopsticks.

Mr. K's owner Johnny Kao, the Taiwanese immigrant who parlayed a dishwashing job into an Asian-restaurant empire, is convinced there's a niche in Manhattan for this brand of opulent décor and fancified service. So he's Orientalized the Art Deco ground floor of the old Lexington Avenue RCA building with jade stones and hand-woven tapestries, laid plush wall-to-wall carpeting, installed acres of wood and etched-glass panels, and opened Mr. K's, Manhattan. Here, as in the capital, manners are (almost quaintly) foremost. Each lady is presented with an orchid corsage. Palates are cleansed with that old-fashioned intermezzo of lemon sorbet. Coffee is brewed fresh at tableside.

All of these niceties come at a price, of course (entrées $16.95 to $37.95), which might register as something of a shock for New Yorkers accustomed to eating "family-style" at one or another Cottage or Garden. But Kao and his chefs distinguish themselves by putting a premium on fresh produce—canned goods and MSG are verboten—and blending East (pork-and-ginger dumplings, Peking duck) with West (vegetable Napoleon, braised veal shank). Privacy doesn't come cheap either: Those high-backed banquettes are custom-made. But do New Yorkers really want to be left alone? When diners at Le Cirque 2000 complained about their obstructed sight lines, Sirio Maccioni obligingly sawed down his overgrown chairs. After all, if a lady isn't seen lunching, what's the point? (570 Lexington Avenue, at 51st Street; 583-1668.)

Robin Raisfeld

Photograph by Steven Freeman.

Blue Note Jazz Club and Restaurant—Should you develop an appetite while listening to some of the world's best jazz acts, this famous Village club offers a full menu, with such Continental fare as shrimp with scallops and salmon with champagne sauce. Open for brunch, too. *131 W. 3rd St. (475-8592). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Da Silvano—Trattoria with tables out front converts this thoroughfare into a people promenade. Great food and views of the local color. Yes, that was Anna Wintour. *260 Sixth Ave., nr. Bleecker St. (982-2343). (M) AE, MC, V.*

53 Grove Street Cafe—This American bistro on a charming Village side street has the requisite exposed brick walls and outdoor patio (in warm weather). There's a raw bar from which one—actually, two—could order the plateau fruits de mer, which comes with vodka or champagne. Or try the sesame-crusted tuna with lemongrass marinade, the filet mignon in bourbon sauce, or the salmon en papillote with oranges. *53 Grove St. (924-8299). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Greenwich Cafe—This Village café, with its plush antique wing chairs and rococo mirrors, has a loungy feel and is open around the clock with a menu that crosses every border. Representative items include crab cakes with lobster sauce and fennel tempura, grilled salmon with jasmine rice, and a veggie burger with minted couscous. No cover for the jazz brunch. *75 Greenwich Ave. (255-5489). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Le Zoo—The newest West Village scene, with lots of Left Bank ambience. The menu sticks to standards like poulet grand mère, saumon en croute, and cassolette. *314 W. 11th St. (620-0393). (M) AE, MC, V.*

One if by Land, Two if by Sea—Elegant Village restaurant situated within an eighteenth-century carriage house previously owned by Aaron Burr. Four fireplaces and nightly piano music enhance a fine menu of American specialties like beef Wellington. *17 Barrow St. (228-0822). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Salam Cafe and Restaurant—This casual Arabic restaurant ensconced in a Village brownstone offers a broad variety of Middle Eastern food, including kebabs, couscous, and lamb with yogurt-and-sesame sauce, plus lots of vegetarian options. Try the Lebanese wine. *104 W. 13th St. (741-0277). (I–M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Tio Pepe—A reliably festive spot for classic Mexican and Spanish fare, from tapas to paella Valenciana, with an enclosed sidewalk café and skylit garden room. *168 W. 4th St. (242-9338). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Washington Place—The large, comfortable dining room feels vaguely colonial, with old prints on the walls and lots of dark wood, but the well-executed American menu couldn't be more modern. Standouts include maple-brushed salmon, roasted venison, and an unusually delicious cherry pie. *75 Washington Pl. (539-1776). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Ye Waverly Inn—This shrine to Colonial times offers American standards like chicken potpie, baked peasant meatloaf, Indian pudding, and hot mulled wine. The room in the landmark building, dated to 1844, has *three* working fireplaces, and is decorated, in true Laura Ashley fashion, with lace curtains and floral wallpaper. *16 Bank St. (929-4377). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, East Side

An American Place—This venerable midtown spot is to New York as Chez Panisse is to Berkeley. With his eclectic American menu, Larry Forgione made the national cuisine interesting again. *2 Park Ave., at 32nd St. (684-2122). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Angelo & Maxie's Steakhouse—This luxurious new steakhouse serves enormous portions of beef—plus alternatives for artery-watchers—to a crowd that's come to have a good, gluttonous time. Many choose to follow their meal with a leisurely smoke, which they're welcome to procure in the well-stocked cigar store. *233 Park Ave. So., at 19th*

Ground Rules:

Here lie a few hundred of the city's more noteworthy restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive, $35 and over per place; (M) = moderate, $15–$30 per place; (I) = inexpensive, $15 and under per place.

Following each listing there is also a code indicating acceptable methods of payment: ($) = cash only, AE = American Express, CB = Carte Blanche, DC = Diners Club, DS = Discover, M = MasterCard, TM = Transmedia, V = Visa. "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted charge/credit card.

St. (220-9200). (M–E) AE, MC, V.

Back Porch—Ideal spot for Murray Hill residents to meet for drinks alfresco and southwestern-flavored fare. Sit outdoors as long as the weather holds. *488 Third Ave., at 33rd St. (685-3828). (I) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Bambou—There's a new flavor on East 14th Street: ambitiously nouvelle renderings of Caribbean cuisine, like ackee-and-callaloo tart with scotch-bonnet-and-tomato salsa, and coconut-curry lobster with banana-lentil salad. The relaxing, tropical dining room and bar have already attracted such boldfaced names and beautiful faces as Harry Belafonte, Marisa Tomei, Iman, and Roshumba. *243 E. 14th St. (358-0012). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Bolo—There's nothing discreet about Bobby Flay's neo-Spanish cooking. In a room that reminds you of Gaudí by way of Pee-wee Herman, Flay turns out fiery, bold dishes like oven-roasted mushrooms with goat cheese and chili oil as well as paella with curried shellfish and chicken. We *love* the white-peach sangría. *23 E. 22nd St. (228-2200). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Brew's—As casual and comfortable as a burger joint gets. This two-story landmark always pleases. Great beer selection, and the always hospitable longtime owners, the Brew family, make this an oasis in the desert above 14th Street. A new attraction is a weekend brunch accompanied by live Irish music, and fifteen versions of that most archetypical brunch drink, the Bloody Mary. *156 E. 34th St. (889-3369). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

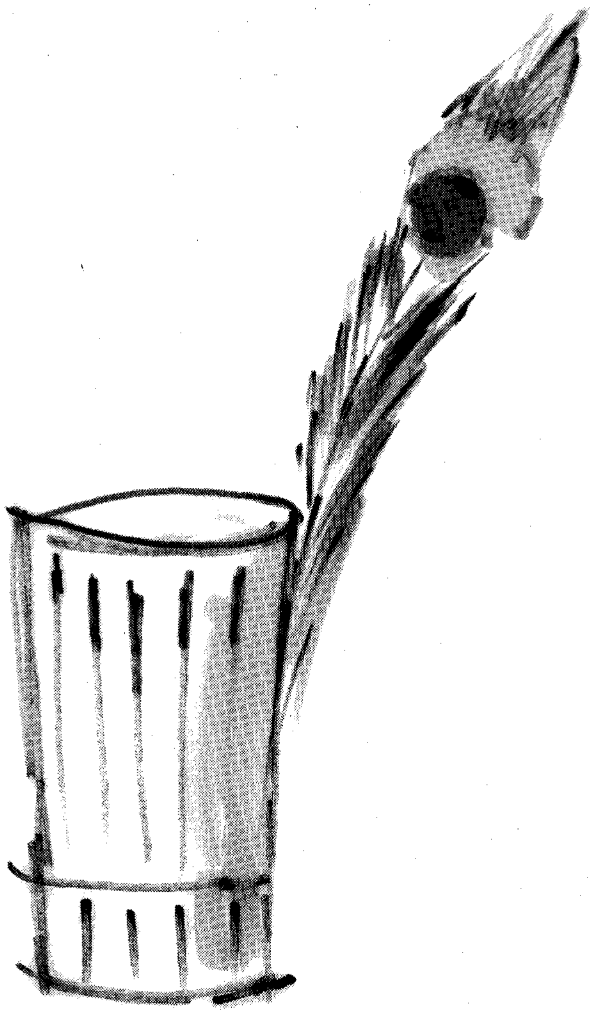
Campagna—The *Letterman* crowd is at one table, Time Warner honchos are at another, and isn't that . . . ? Despite the frenzy of having become Media Central, this smart little trattoria serves some of the most satisfying Italian food in Manhattan. Chef Mark Straussman is to thank for dishes like rabbit in polenta, gnocchi with wild mushrooms and truffle oil, and grilled tuna with beets. *24 E. 21st St. (460-0900). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

El Parador Cafe—Very possibly the oldest Mexican restaurant in New York City, this comfortable, dependable establishment is known for its enormous selection of premium tequilas and traditional dishes like mole poblano, carnitas, and duck with cuipotle glaze. *325 E. 34th St. (679-6812). (M) MC, V.*

Gramercy Tavern—As a second act to Danny Meyer's much-loved Union Square Cafe, this Flatiron American newcomer doesn't disappoint. The main dining room manages to be both impressive and cozy, the service superlative, and Tom Colicchio's food inspired. For lesser appetites and lower budgets, the bar menu in the Tavern Room is equally delicious. Orchestrate your own cheese course and sample the varied selection of wines by the glass. *42 E. 20th St. (477-0777). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

i Trulli—A Southern Italian restaurant that aims to prove that tomato sauce is not crucial for survival, i Trulli succeeds with tasty focaccia, homemade sausage, tripe, and venison. In warm weather, the garden is a perfect midtown escape. *122 E. 27th St. (481-7372). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Les Halles—Even though it hasn't been around forever, this utterly perfect re-creation of a Left Bank bistro seems like it has. This is the place to come for onion soup, steak-frites, celeri rémoulade,



Just in case you missed *The New York Times* review of Peacock Alley and our exciting new chef Laurent Gras, here's a quick summary:

★ ★ ★

"The three best meals I have had this year have all been at the same restaurant. Peacock Alley." *-Ruth Reichl*

PEACOCK ALLEY

THE WALDORF-ASTORIA 301 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK 212.872.4895

crème caramel—that sort of thing. *411 Park Ave. So., bet. 28th and 29th Sts. (679-4111). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Mesa Grill—Chef Bobby Flay believes in big flavors and big portions. He developed his own signature style, plundering the ingredients of the American Southwest for such mouthwatering creations as roasted-garlic shrimp tamales and ancho-honey-glazed salmon. Loud, stylish, and loads of fun, especially for those partaking of the house drink, a cactus-pear margarita. *102 Fifth Ave., nr. 16th St. (807-7400). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Novitá—A beautiful new Flatiron restaurant with upscale, nouvelle Italian. Try, especially, the handmade pastas, which seem to have only beneficial effects on all the fashion types and Elite models who've made this room their home away from home. *102 E. 22nd St. (677-2222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Oyster Bar—When a fire temporarily shuttered this Manhattan landmark, its long-faithful clientele were bereft, unsure of what to do with themselves at lunchtime. The doors have reopened, the vaulted ceilings have been (for the most part) repaired, and the regulars are taking their places at the counter. Famous for its 25 varieties of oysters, extensive wine selection, and comprehensive seafood preparations, the restaurant is a magnet for commuters and tourists alike. *Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. and Vanderbilt Ave. (490-6650). (M) AE, CB, DS, MC, V.*

Opening
House of Commons

Two fugitive managers from the sedate Willow restaurant and the designer responsible for the clubby interior of Onieal's Grand Street have transformed one of the Upper East Side's many Irish pubs into a downtown-aspiring hangout. Nestled in amid the anonymous towers of Yorkville, with an eclectic American menu, a mezzanine restaurant, and the requisite lounge, the Commons is intended to keep customers captive all night long. (1803 Second Avenue, near 93rd Street; 426-8350.)

Park Bistro—Provençal offerings prepared and served with notable agility in an intimate—sometimes crowded—setting. *414 Park Ave. at 28th St. (689-1360). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Patria—Zesty Latin American fare brought to you in a festive high-energy atmosphere. The three-story dining room suits the changing mood of diners: bright and airy by day and warm and earthy by night. Chef Doug Rodriguez comes from Miami via a childhood in New York. Really. Try the Mojito, Patria's signature drink made from sugarcane. *250 Park Ave. So., nr. 20th St. (777-6211). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Piccolino—A country-style Italian restaurant offering homemade pastas and thin-crust pizzas in a peach stucco duplex. (The building is a century old.) Worth trying are the risotto pescatore, shrimp-pesto pizza, and veal quattroformaggio. *8 E. 36th St. (683-6444). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Rodeo Bar & Grill—This place bills itself as "the longest-running honky-tonk in New York," attracting bikers, families, and music-industry insiders who come for the live nightly music as much as for the Tex-Mex grub. Try the house-smoked baby back ribs, bison burgers, and Santa Fe hand rolls, or just grab a drink at the horse trailer that's been converted into a bar. *375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500). (I) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Rossini's—This elegant split-level restaurant offers Northern Italian cuisine and live music nightly. Chef Gilberto specializes in seafood, and private parties are easily accommodated. *108 E. 38th St. (683-0135). (E) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Turkish Kitchen—This crimson-walled den has long been a beacon for adventurous eaters, who come for house specialties including kebabs, seafood and a variety of Turkish appetizers. *386 Third Ave., nr. 27th St. (679-1810). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Union Square Cafe—The careful service, human-scale dining rooms, and peerless California café cuisine make this one of the best restaurants in the city. *21 E. 16th St. (243-4020). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Water Club—This romantic spot overlooking the East River is a favorite for formal affairs, but even your average demanding New York diner would be happy with the American menu and the airy, yacht club–like setting. As to be expected in this nautical environment, there's a heavy emphasis on seafood like lobster and soft-shell crabs, and a massive spread for Sunday brunch. Jackets suggested in the main dining room. *F.D.R. Drive via 23rd St. (683-3333). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

Caffe Bondí Ristorante—Popular with the photographers who work in the Flatiron district and foodies from all over who fill the garden in warm weather. Specializes in Sicilian dishes like coniglio alla stimparata, pasta con sarde, and cassata Siciliana. Open seven days a week, including weekend brunch. *7 W. 20th St. (691-8136). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Da Umberto—Low-key Chelsea façade belies the extraordinary Italian offerings inside. Getting a table is no small task, especially in the evening. This is a Euro–New York crossroads. A mad cacophony of laughter and chatter in Brooklynese and Roman. Don't dress down. *107 W. 17th St. (989-0303). (E) AE only.*

Simply Pasta—Perfectly situated for pretheater, this moderately priced Northern Italian restaurant offers such dependable, fresh fare as Caesar salad, osso buco, and tirami su. *120 W. 41st St. (391-0805). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Soul Fixins'—Until now, this humble source of delicious soul food has been a convenient pit stop for lunch in the Penn Station–Macy's vicinity. Now house specialties like collard greens, macaroni and cheese, ribs, and sweet-potato pie are available for dinner or catered affairs. Closed weekends. *371 W. 34th St. (736-1345). (I) ($).*

Tap Room—New York's very first Austrian brewpub, with fresh lagers and pilsners on tap and a menu that indicates a seriousness about food that's rare in the microbrewery business. Goulash, spaetzle, Wiener schnitzel, and homemade sausages sound like the perfect accompaniments for beer. *3 W. 18th St. (691-7666). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

World Yacht—Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—over dinner. The luxury yacht boards at six, and sails from seven until ten. *Pier 81, W. 41st St. and the Hudson River (630-8100). (E) AE, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, East Side

Café Centro—A big, shiny brasserie-cum-café in the lobby of the MetLife Building; there's inventive cooking going on here, and the joint is as fun and good as non-expensive midtown gets. In the loud little Beer Bar, get one of the best hamburgers in town. Closed Sunday. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (818-1222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Caviar Russe—The owners of this caviar bar and boutique are also importers, which means that you're getting your Beluga—and golden Osetra, and Sevruga—right from the source. The petite restaurant ensconced in a midtown townhouse will gladly feed you a spoonful or a more substantial meal, like a foie gras sandwich with Armagnac-soaked figs, or steak tartare with baby-beet-and-black-truffle salad. Afternoon tea and prix fixe menus also available. *538 Madison Ave., nr. 54th St. (980-5908). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cocktail Terrace at the Waldorf-Astoria—A convenient roost for a business breakfast or afternoon tea. At night, to accompany your cocktail, there's live piano music and the occasional fashion show. *301 Park Ave., at 50th St. (872-4818). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cucina & Co.—This market-style takeout shop and café is ideally situated in the lobby of the MetLife Building to catch the crush of commuters passing through Grand Central. Breakfast pastries, specialty sandwiches, baked pastas, steak-frites, and "Dinners for Two" keep the worker bees fueled throughout the day. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (682-2700). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Domingo—The opera star's very own Spanish kitchen right in midtown Manhattan. Downstairs there's a Castilian-style tapas bar; upstairs, a more formal dining room with dramatic skylights. Drop in for churros y chocolate, or make a full meal of the regional Spanish specialties such as paella Valenciana. *209 E. 49th St. (826-8269). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Genki Sushi—Not your typical sushi bar but a moving conveyor belt with color-coded dishes that indicate the price of your lunch. This midtown branch is the first American outpost of an Asian megachain headquartered in Singapore. The restaurant, whose high-tech design incorporates a wall of exposed sound panels, Lucite chairs and stools, and a Warholian upholstery pattern, also offers bento boxes, vegetarian dishes, sashimi, and a varied sake selection. *9 E. 46th St. (983-5018). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Giambelli 50th Ristorante—Upscale Northern Italian fare served in a warm and cozy atmosphere. The chef imports esoteric varieties of pasta from Italy to prepare his specialties; the fish and meat dishes are as carefully considered. *46 E. 50th St. (688-2760). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

La Mediterranée—A cozy midtown bistro famous for its simple, well-priced peasant food. Try house specials like cold poached salmon, chilled stuffed baby lobster, and baby lamb chops. *947 Second Ave., nr. 50th St. (755-4155). (M) AE, DC.*

Lespinasse—Marie Antoinette, where are you? This ultra-formal dining room in the St. Regis Hotel—think Versailles and you get the rococo drift—is where you'll find Gray Kunz's inventive Franco-Oriental cooking. The $44 prix fixe at lunch is a gentle introduction to exactly what wonders chef Kunz can perform. *2 E. 55th St., in the St. Regis Hotel (339-6719). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Montebello—The staff at this cozy neighborhood restaurant offers a gracious welcome, while the kitchen provides upscale Northern Italian fare, especially affordable in the four-course pretheater menu. Specialties include angel's-hair pasta with fresh tomato and basil, and shrimp sautéed with cognac, broccoli, and red peppers. Private party room available. *120 E. 56th St. (753-1447). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Photograph by Steven Freeman.

Morton's of Chicago—This midwestern import has taken Manhattan by storm, winning converts with its tender double porterhouse and men's club charm. Hard to believe it's a chain. *551 Fifth Ave., at 45th St. (972-3315). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Naples 45 Ristorante e Pizzeria—This new, sprawling Italian restaurant and carry-out in the MetLife building serves authentic Neapolitan cuisine, including excellent thin-crust pizzas, baked to order by experienced pizza masters imported directly from Italy. Also try the twice-baked sandwiches and the wide array of wines by the glass. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (972-7001). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Otabe—Customers are ministered to by their own chefs in the private teppan-grill rooms. The cool, contemporary décor—beige tones and wood paneling—in the main dining room brings serenity to midtown. *68 E. 56th St. (223-7575). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Shinbashi—After nearly a quarter of a century, this elegant Japanese restaurant is still an oasis in the frenzy of midtown. Owner Fumiko Hosoda offers a traditional menu of tempura, sukiyaki, teriyaki, and sushi, plus an array of chef's specialties. *280 Park Ave., at 48th St. (661-3915). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Tatou—Gilded-plaster satyrs, cherubs, jazz onstage, and New American cuisine. Executive chef Neal Myers, formerly of Ben Benson's, transports his expertise with meats and creatively prepared seafood, like pepper-crusted tuna with winter squash and black vinegar sauce, and crab cakes accompanied by cole slaw rolls. Try something from the extensive raw-bar menu. *151 E. 50th St. (753-1144). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Tropica—Always packed at lunch, but squeeze in at the bar and order the salmon and a glass of tropical iced tea. The dining room serves the most imaginative seafood in town, but be sure to go on a weekday—the restaurant, located in the lobby of the MetLife Building, is closed Saturday and Sunday. *200 Park Ave., nr. 45th St. (867-6767). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

American Festival Cafe—Lunch inside this glamorized eatery with rotating American folk art. Skaters in winter and a garden in the summer and early fall make for fierce window-seat competition. *Rockefeller Plaza, 20 W. 50th St. (332-7620). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Barbetta—This elegant theater-district duplex is still owned, amazingly, by its founding family. The elaborate interior provides a peaceful background for regional specialties like fonduta, rabbit alla Piedmontese, and a variety of wild-game dishes. The garden is a summertime oasis. *321 W. 46th St. (246-9171). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Ben Benson's—This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. The festive air gets pretty thick by the bar, where cigars prevail, but the dining room is entirely devoted to the consumption of standards like lobsters, crab cakes, veal, and four cuts of steak. Free validated parking available. *123 W. 52nd St. (581-8888). (E) AE, DS, MC, V.*

Broadway Joe—Located in a townhouse on Restaurant Row, this steakhouse serves a fourteen-ounce prime rib but also delivers fresh seafood and pasta for the omnivore. Hirschfeld caricatures cover the walls, so come find your NINAs while you dine. Discount dinner parking. Private parties. *315 W. 46th St. (246-6513). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

C2 at the China Club—The restaurant at the newly relocated China Club is conspicuously upscale for its Eighth Avenue address and surprisingly calm for its affiliation with the dance club upstairs. Chef Eban Ross has created an eclectic menu of Asian-influenced dishes like tuna-and-salmon tartare with daikon-hijiki slaw and braised lamb shank with maple-roasted acorn squash. *268 W. 47th St. (398-3800). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

China Regency—This Chinese-Japanese hybrid is located conveniently in midtown's hotel nexus. Try any of the noodle dishes or a sampling from the sushi bar. Private-party facilities are upstairs. *850 Seventh Ave., nr. 54th St. (247-6440). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Christer's—Famous for its spectacular selection of salmon, this Scandinavian-inspired restaurant, designed by David Rockwell to resemble a colorful, cozy mountain lodge, is a great choice for contemporary renditions of seafood. Open Sundays. *145 W. 55th St. (974-7224). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cité—An extravagant French steakhouse, marble and pewter with blazing chandeliers, and a more affordable grill next door. *120 W. 51st St. (956-7100). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Da Rosina—A convenient pretheater location, specializing in homemade pasta and other casual Italian fare. Try the $19.98 prix fixe. *342 W. 46th St. (977-7373). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Frankie and Johnnie's Steakhouse—The oldest speakeasy in the city. In the same location in the theater district since 1926. Try the steaks and the chops. Yes, that was Tom Selleck. *269 W. 45th St. (997-9494). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

La Veranda—Northern Italian food. A popular spot in the theater district offering generous portions of fish, seafood, veal chops and pasta. *163 W. 47th St. (391-0905). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Langan's—American cuisine in a clublike setting. Food ranges from Black Angus steaks to crab cakes and seafood. A trendy, well-heeled crowd at the much-frequented bar mixes with theatergoers in the dining room. *150 W. 47th St. (869-5482). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Opening
Motor Mouths

Named for a French scooter and geared to its West Chelsea environs with rotating art exhibits, Le Solex is a decided boon for its posher-by-the-minute neighborhood. The owners of the Le Gamin café empire have opened their biggest kitchen yet to turn out such savory French standards as veal daube with pasta gratin, mussels in a Muscadet broth, and rabbit fricassee. To accommodate night-owl artists (and everyone else absolved from the nine-to-five grind), breakfast is served till 4 P.M. daily. (470 West 23rd Street; 627-1331.)

Lattanzi—Reliable Italian in a romantic garden. Go when there's no danger of a curtain rising or falling soon for special attention. *361 W. 46th St. (315-0980). (M) AE only.*

Le Bernardin—French-born Eric Ripert carries forth the quest of his predecessor, the late Gilbert Le Coze, for the world's most spectacular seafood. His ambitious signature dishes—scallops and foie gras with truffles, Spanish-style mackerel in Jerez vinegar, saddle of monkfish—have already won a very loyal following. *155 W. 51st St. (489-1515). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Martini's—Convenient for pre- and post-theater, with a buzzing year-round sidewalk café and chef Richard Krause's rustic homemade pastas, charcoal-grilled seafood, and wood-oven pizza. *810 Seventh Ave., at 53rd St. (767-1717). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Molyvos—This interpretive Greek restaurant a stone's throw from Carnegie Hall is a large, stylishly rustic showcase for chef Jim Botsacos's serious Mediterranean menu. Sit at one of the tables up front for drinks and meze, or indulge larger appetites with dishes like grilled octopus, rabbit stifado, and vegetable dolmades. *871 Seventh Ave., nr. 55th St. (582-7500). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

No. 18—During the day, this sleekly decorated midtown nook caters to the office crowd with an express lunch for an unusually-good-for-the-neighborhood price of $13. At night, it morphs into an atmospheric martini bar and dining room where an eclectic variety of flavorful, well-seasoned American fare is served. The risotto is highly acclaimed, and the $25 pretheater dinner is a bargain. *18 W. 56th St. (489-1888). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Osteria del Circo—The restaurant of the moment, partly because of its excellent bloodlines (Sirio Maccioni's brood of charming sons runs the place) and partly because of its flavorful, home-style Italian menu. Be sure to try anything created by proud mother (and food consultant) Mrs. Maccioni. *120 W. 55th St. (265-3636). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Pierre au Tunnel—Traditional French cuisine, served in thoroughly charming and comfortable surroundings. *250 W. 47th St. (575-1220). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Pig and Whistle—This is midtown's notion of an Irish bar. A business clientele and a coming-and-going-to-the-theater crowd can find Irish specialties—both solid and liquid—here. *165 W. 47th St. (302-0112). (M) AE, MC, V.*

René Pujol—This theater-district oasis offers fine provincial French cooking in a sweet country-inn atmosphere. The conventionally familiar menu includes such specials as pan-seared duck breast with fruit chutney, steamed cod with coriander and ginger vinaigrette, and a salad of warm lobster, mesclun, and julienned vegetables. *321 W. 51st St. (246-3023). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse—A steak cooked in butter is the centerpiece of this successful upscale chain's take-no-prisoners march east across the country. Steak served in a series of connected, muted, and wood-paneled dining rooms. *148 W. 51st St. (245-9600). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

SeaGrill—Plush, cozy dining room opens to garden tables in the summer and offers a view of the Rockefeller Center skating rink in winter. The serving team does cartwheels toting crab cakes with two sauces, lobster salad with couscous in spicy lobster oil, and pepper-seared tuna steak at premium prices. *Rockefeller Plaza, 19 W. 49th St. (332-7610). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Stage Delicatessen—A landmark deli that serves gigantic sandwiches, every one of which is worth returning for. *834 Seventh Ave., nr. 54th St. (245-7850). (I) AE, MC, V.*

Tennessee Mountain Restaurant & Saloon—The midtown offshoot of a SoHo rib joint, this much larger duplex restaurant serves an extensive southern barbecue menu. Tchotchkes can be had at the "general store" souvenir stand, and cigar smokers have their own room in which to exhale. The barbecued and hickory-smoked ribs have already made a major impression on Manhattan meat-lovers. *121 W. 45th St. (869-4545). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Texas Texas Restaurant & Saloon—This casual barbecue joint on a bustling Broadway corner attracts tourists and local office workers looking for affordable southwestern grub like baby back ribs, plank-roasted salmon, and barbecued chicken. The CD player is programmed to play recordings by

Photograph by Bernd Auers.

Texas artists only. *1600 Broadway, at 48th St. (956-7427). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Torre di Pisa—David Rockwell designed this midtown Italian import as a surreal version of the Leaning Tower. Pane fritto con prosciutto di Parma and fagotto al funghi porcini are examples of the chef's updated Tuscan standards. A separate cigar/smoking room is available for private parties. *19 W. 44th St. (398-4400). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Victor's Cafe 52—A venerable neighborhood haunt with tropical flair. Try the Cuban sandwich or the roast suckling pork. *236 W. 52nd St. (586-7714). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, TM, V.*

57th–60th Streets

Contrapunto—Join the queue in this good-looking, updated restaurant that's added a roster of sophisticated meat and seafood dishes to its renowned pastas. *200 E. 60th St. (751-8616). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven—The country's entertainment-industry glitterati make themselves right at home in I. M. Pei's monumental dining room. Susan Weaver is one of the only working chefs to combine contemporary presentation and technique with classic Provençal on one plate. The weekend bar scene puts the concept-hotel bar scene to shame. *57 E. 57th St. (758-5700). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Les Célébrités—Plush and old-fashioned, this imposing dining room in the Essex House on Central Park South also happens to have a very fine kitchen. Dinner only. *160 Central Park So. (484-5113). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

The Manhattan Ocean Club—Savor your seafood in an elegant dining room decorated with Picasso ceramics and Brazilian-red-cherry floors. *57 W. 58th St. (371-7777). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Rosa Mexicano—Did someone say "fresh-pomegranate margarita"? Yes, someone did. What's more, this spot prepares your guacamole tableside (a south-of-the-border hibachi?). Some of the tastier gourmet Mexican in the city. *1063 First Ave., at 58th St. (753-7407). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

San Domenico—Toques off to owner Tony May, who may have done more for the cause of serious Italian cooking in New York than any other single restaurateur. His dining room is formal, and the food is wonderful. *240 Central Park So. (265-5959). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Two Rooms—You'd never expect it, but this landmark townhouse in the shadow of the Queensboro Bridge is home to an extremely eclectic establishment, with colonial African décor in the skylit upstairs restaurant and a fireplace in the low-key downstairs lounge. Some of the dishes on the contemporary American menu include seared duck foie gras, risotto of grilled sweet corn and pancetta, and crispy salmon in rice paper. *313 E. 58th St. (223-1886). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Le Veau d'Or—This old-fashioned, family-run French Provincial bistro has been around for an astounding 60 years and serves the usual traditional suspects: cassoulet, braised beef, and calf's liver with onions. *129 E. 60th St. (838-8133). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, East Side

Allora—This cozy restaurant appeals to neighborhood regulars looking for gently priced Italian standards like osso buco and linguine pescatore. For the fish lover, crab cakes and Dover sole would make an ideal order. *1321 First Ave., at 71st St. (570-0384). (I) AE.*

Andrusha—Just because you live uptown doesn't mean you need to succumb to the relentless Chinese-and-pasta delivery routine. This understated restaurant serves a variety of Eastern European dishes, from the familiar (beef Stroganoff, blini with caviar or smoked fish) to the less so (Czech roast duck, coulibiac of vegetables). *1370 Lexington Ave., nr. 90th St. (369-9374). (M) DC, MC, V.*

Baraonda—When the rest of the neighborhood is dark, this elegant Northern Italian hot spot is just starting to glow. The Rangers celebrated their Stanley Cup victory here, and yes, that was George Michael. *1439 Second Ave., at 75th St. (288-8555). (M) ($).*

Club Macanudo—This plush, elegant shrine to cigar-smoking also offers, besides an astonishing selection of smokes, a sophisticated variety of edibles. The American menu, listing such offbeat items as warm lobster enchiladas and pork loin with coffee-barbecue sauce, takes inspiration from Latin and Caribbean cuisines. Jackets required. *26 E. 63rd St. (752-8200). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Hurricane Island—This American restaurant named for an island off the coast of Maine specializes, of course, in fresh lobster and seafood, and offers a better-than-average selection of microbrews with bottles from Belgium and Germany. *1303 Third Ave., at 75th St. (717-6600). (M) AE, MC, V.*

JoJo—The grilled chicken with chickpea frites is a great dish. But then, Jean-Georges Vongerichten doesn't make many mistakes in this elegant, jewel-like dining room situated on two floors of an East Sixties townhouse. Lunch upstairs, overlooking the street, is especially lovely. *160 E. 64th St. (223-5656). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Mark's—Decked out like an English library, with plump, tasseled pillows to nest against. Fine East-West cooking and first-rate desserts. *25 E. 77th St., in the Mark Hotel (879-1864). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Mesa City—Bobby Flay's casual uptown bastion of innovative southwestern fare offers a unique variety of quesadillas, plus heartier dishes like ribs with molasses-barbecue sauce and sweet-potato tamale with spinach. The bar attracts regulars with the house margarita, spiked with cactus-pear juice, and its selection of twenty brands of tequila. *1059 Third Ave., nr. 62nd St. (207-1919). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Nino's—Elegant Italian with a romantic mural garden and nightly live entertainment. Try the grilled dishes—tuna on a bed of balsamic onions, double-cut veal chop—or the lobster fra diavolo. *1354 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (988-0002). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Park Avenue Cafe—A polished, countrified American café for business lunches and off-duty get-to-know-yous in the evening. Chef David Burke makes the tired catchall "American fare" sing, and keeps the haute neighbors rapt with signature dishes like rack of lamb and his swordfish chop. *100 E. 63rd St. (644-1900). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Post House—Clubby and comfortable, this handsome dining room specializes in good quality and big portions. The peppery Cajun-style steak is a favorite, especially with a side order of French fries or onion rings. There are dishes with decidedly less cholesterol—poached salmon, say, or lemon chicken—but this isn't a place to watch your waistline. Seriously. *28 E. 63rd St., in the Lowell Hotel (935-2888). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Primavera—This elegant uptown restaurant serves sophisticated renditions of Northern Italian food, like baby eels with oil and garlic, and roasted baby goat. The comfortable wood-paneled room, lit with antique fixtures and filled with fresh flowers, brings a touch of luxury to the neighborhood. *1578 First Ave., nr. 82nd St. (861-8608). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Sel & Poivre—Stanching the flow downtown for bistro fare. Regulars find what they are looking for in this quaint, countrified space. The country-French cuisine includes specialties like steak au poivre, bouillabaisse, and roasted chicken, and the prix fixe menus are a bargain. *853 Lexington Ave., nr. 64th St. (517-5780). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, West Side

Picholine—Chef Terrance Brennan's French-Mediterranean cuisine is as beautiful to look at as it is delicious to eat. Try the risotto, smoky with tender duck and wild mushrooms, and velvety foie gras with peach coulis, and save room for a glass of port to accompany the amazingly rich and well-chosen cheese course. *35 W. 64th St. (724-8585). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Restaurant 222—Cozy and romantic, with the feel of a townhouse, Frank Valenza's top-rated New American West Sider is a luxurious surprise in a neighborhood nearly bereft of them. The $42.50 dinner prix fixe, available Sunday through Thursday, is a great deal. *222 W. 79th St. (799-0400). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Sarabeth's—This New York institution is a homey place for upscale down-home food like chicken potpie and pancakes. It also offers a children's menu and a mouth-watering bakery counter, with homemade, award-winning jams and preserves. *423 Amsterdam Ave., nr. 80th St. (496-6280). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Tavern on the Green—A must for your country cousin. This mazelike collection of dining rooms, each with a view of the park better than the previous one's, is worth cutting the hansom-cab ride short for. *Central Park at 67th St. (873-3200). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

West 63rd Street Steakhouse—Mahogany tables and red suede walls make this nice-ified steakhouse less stultifying than its midtown brethren. Twenty-foot ceilings allow for a spectacular view of Lincoln Center, and there are seafood and pasta for those who enjoy the company of a meat-eater. *44 W. 63rd St. (246-6363). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Brooklyn

Casa Pepe—Mexican and Spanish fare meld in this elegant restaurant, with garden dining in fine weather and a fireplace to warm up the gray days of winter. The seafood-heavy menu finds best expression in the zarzuela de mariscos, the paella marinera, and the tacos Vera Cruz. *114 Bay Ridge Ave. (718-833-8865). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Lundy Bros.—This restored landmark restaurant serves a wide-ranging menu of fish, pasta, chicken, and steak but specializes in lobster and other varieties of seafood. Don't miss the oyster bar or the reconstructed shore dinner. Sunday brunch buffet available. *1901 Emmons Ave. (718-743-0022). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

The River Cafe—It's always worth crossing the bridge to sit waterside, enchanted by the skyline and a celebration of contemporary American cooking that predates the throng. Outdoor seating in season. *1 Water St. (718-522-5200). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V*

Object of Desire
Gnew Gnocchi

By substituting butternut squash for the humble russet, chef Claudio Meneghini of TriBeCa's new Paggio restaurant elevates the classic Italian comfort food into gnocchi that are subtly sweet, spiced with nutmeg and sage and sprinkled with creamy buffalo mozzarella. (223 West Broadway; 334-8077.)

Photograph by Amy Freeth.

nightlife

Lambchop...Feldman...Art Ensemble of Chicago

Concerts

The Allman Brothers Band—The hirsute Southerners kick off a month's worth of chicken-fried boogie. Some young Deadheads may be following Phish around, but judging from the trippy "Peakin' at the Beacon" posters around town, we're guessing this is the real show for misguided-youth (not to mention middle- and old-age) watching. 3/3–3/4 at 8 P.M. *The Beacon Theatre, 2124 Broadway, at 75th St. (496-7070). Sold out.*

Art Ensemble of Chicago—The Windy City's face-paint-wearing free-jazz quartet hit a downtown gallery turned performance space last summer, and turned the place upside down with their brainiac riffing. Now watch as they turn the staid environs of Lincoln Center into an orgy of mind-bending improvisation and once again demonstrate their well-deserved motto, "Great black music—ancient to the future." 2/28 at 8 P.M. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center. (875-5050). $25–$30.*

"Casino Night on Broadway"—Peoria poster boy Matt Lauer hosts a benefit for the National MS Society. For the record: You still have to take one of those cruises to nowhere if you want a real casino. 2/28 at 8:30 P.M. *Marriott Marquis Hotel, 1535 Broadway, between 45th and 46th Sts. (463-7787). $125.*

"Just for Tonight: A Seventies Broadway Songbook"—*One Day at a Time*'s Mackenzie Phillips stars opposite latter-day Broadway icons Sean McDermott and Tara O'Brien in a salute to the not-so-golden era of musical theater. *Cats,* anyone? 2/27 at 8 P.M. *The Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (840-2824). $15–$25.*

Kristen Ann Carr Fund Winter Semi-Formal—Rub shoulders with Bruce Springsteen (and a bunch of music-industry honchos) and help raise money to fight cancer among kids. 2/28 at 8 P.M. *The Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (501-0748). $75–$85.*

Limp Bizkit—Goofy funk metal that makes Primus look positively scholarly. With Clutch. 2/27 at 7:30 P.M. *Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (564-4882). $13.50.*

"The Lost Jazz Shrines: Newark"—Hard as it may be to believe, the world's car-theft capital was once a thriving jazz hub—Duke Ellington himself once referred to the now-moribund burg as "the best place in the world to listen to black music." Amiri Baraka headlines this salute to the days when figures such as stride pianist Willie "the Lion" Smith ruled the scene. 2/28 at 7:30 P.M. *Victoria Theater, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center St., Newark (888-GO-NJPAC). $15–$20.*

The Mighty Mighty Bosstones—The mysteries of teen taste will always be just that—mysteries. Nowhere is this principle better demonstrated than in the ongoing success of this curious Boston frat-ska mob. Between leader Dicky Barrett's barf-bag vocals, the various members' onstage puerility, and the general lack of purpose that pervades the band's music, you're left scratching your head. Still, if you want to see a bunch of kids go absolutely nuts, a Bosstones show is the place to go. 3/1–3/2 at 7:30 P.M. *Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. (307-7171). $15.50.*

Pax Founders' Party—Rudy Giuliani, all-you-can-drink booze, and world peace. Plus, disco dancing. Not bad for half a C-note. 2/28 at 8 P.M. *The Puck Building, 295 Lafayette St. (957-5661). $50.*

"Sanctuary"—A five-night festival of spiritual and choral music, in spiritual SoHo. 2/23: Brooklyn drum collective Ancient Vibrations performs Nyabinghi rhythms. 2/24: La Troupe Makandal plays Afro-Haitian music drawing from voodoo traditions. 2/25: Reza DeRakshani plays Persian spiritual music; Gamelan Son of Lion plays the chiming tones of Java and Bali. 2/26: New Jersey Christian-poppers the Danielson Famile [*sic*] kick it like a surrealist Osmond outfit, or a God-loving Ween. 2/27: Emilio Barreto y Los Afortunados play music derived from the Santeria religion. 2/23–2/27 at 8 P.M. *Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway (966-9520). $7.*

Talent

Good Chemistry

Their debut CD is titled 'The Unstable Molecule,' but Isotope 217 are as rock-steady as a noble gas. Channeling the Miles Davis of the fifties, sixties, and seventies (often simultaneously), the Chicago sextet layers modal jazz riffing, burbling funk grooves, and low-key break beats. They play their first New York show February 25 at the Knitting Factory.

Photograph by Brad Miller.

Clubland

Arlene Grocery—The Lower East Side's newish, hippish, and appealingly inexpensive (okay, free) rock and folk venue. 2/26: Van Allen Belt; Mr. Henry; Fontaine. 2/27: Poolesville. 2/28: The Papaya Kings. *95 Stanton St. (358-1633). $.*

The Baggot Inn—A cozy West Village gathering spot for NYU students and other sweater-wearing folk enthusiasts. 2/26: Industrial Tepee. 2/27: Gawk. *82 W. 3rd St. (477-0622). $.*

Ground Rules:

In clubland, promptness is *not* next to godliness; expect shows to start much later than promised. $ = cash only.

Bottom Line—A top-notch venue—with great sound, good sight lines, and pretty decent fries—given to rock, jazz, and folk artists of all stripes. 2/26: "Ringing in My Ears (in Memory of Don Brody)." The Bongos; Marshall Crenshaw; Dar Williams; Camp Hoboken. 2/27: Doc Watson; David Olney. 2/28: Rick Danko; Alan Meadows. 3/1: Tom Paxton; Lucy Kaplansky. 3/2: Ed Palermo & His Big Band play the music of Frank Zappa; Ike Willis. 3/3: James McMurtry; Fred Eaglesmith. *15 W. 4th St. (228-7880).*

Brownies—Avenue A's divey post-college rock spot, with good tap beers, on-the-rise bands, and the occasional big name trying to keep a low profile. Cozy and congenial, even if you're not pierced. 2/24: Damn the Diva. 2/25: Hot Water; Lancaster County Prison; Hayseed; Full Throttle Aristotle. 2/27: Pen Pal; Travis Pickle. 2/28: Thin Lizard Dawn; the Interpreters; United States III. *169 Ave. A, at 11th St. (420-8392). $.*

CBGB & OMFUG—Ground zero of punk's Stateside explosion and, twenty years later, still a smoking, flyer-strewn pit—in a good way. Dig the new, unscuzzy basement lounge. 2/27–2/28: East Village scuzz-rock stalwarts D Generation haven't forgotten that trashy glamour is better than no glamour at all (and is often better than glitzy glamour, too). Keeping that in mind, they continue to forge ahead where the New York Dolls left off, twenty-odd years ago. Yeah! *315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052). $.*

Chicago B.L.U.E.S.—A downtown blueserie, comfortably down-home, with living-room couches behind the stage. Dedicated to bringing us the best and brightest from the midwestern blues capital. 2/24: Keith "the Captain" Gamble. 2/25: Big Jack Johnson. 2/26: Mason Casey. 2/27: Ladies Sing the Blues. *73 Eighth Ave., bet. 13th and 14th Sts. (924-9755). $.*

Coney Island High—Originally a glam-trash revival hall, this two-level East Village funhouse now reflects the neighborhood's cultural diversity, with indie-rock and punk bands sharing the venue with some of the city's wackiest parties. 2/24: God Lives Underwater; Fluorescein; Love in Reverse. 2/28: The Casualties; Kill Your Idols. 3/1: The Business; L.E.S. Stitches. 3/4: Surf-rock pioneers the Ventures. *15 St. Marks Pl. (674-7959).*

Fez—Mingus fever and lush *faux*-Moroccan ambience make this the neo-boho place to be on Thursdays, when the mighty Mingus Big Band rocks the house, playing the works of the great, brawling jazz bassist with a freshness and authority rarely seen in jazz today. Wednesday's comedy revue "Stella" continues to deliver some of the finest young stand-up talent in the city. The Sun Ra Arkestra swings on in joyful idiosyncrasy Sunday nights through March. 2/24: "Sweet Blessedness: A Tribute to Laura Nyro." 2/27: Susan Warner. 2/28: Everlounge; Voodoo Martini; Cocktail Angst. 3/2: Swoon. 3/3: Southern boy Ben Folds may currently be getting all the attention in the wounded-ivory-tickler department, but our money is on Brooklyn's more mature Lee Feldman (and though Feldman is 38, we don't just mean "older"). On his captivating *Living It All Wrong,* he blends a wry seventies-songwriter sensibility with Cole Porter wordplay and barrelhouse stride stylings. Backed by crackerjack bassist Randy Landau and steady-as-a-rock trapsman Alan Berozi, Feldman explores such timeless themes as men misunderstanding women, women misunderstanding men, and both misunderstanding each other—all with more shiver-inducing musical twists than an Elton John imitator like Folds will conceive in a lifetime. (See photo, below.) With Heather Eatman and Professor & Maryann. *Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (533-2680).*

Irving Plaza—A midsize bi-level rock venue with moody chandeliers and a sort of haunted-bordello look. It's a bit of a crush near the stage, but there's an amiable bar, 119, right around the corner for a preshow aperitif. "Savoy Sundays" are weekly swingfests of ballroom dancing. 2/27: Hum; Swervedriver. 3/3–3/4: Reel Big Fish; Mr. T Experience; Pilfers. *17 Irving Pl. (777-6800).*

Knitting Factory—The Disneyland of downtown music, with three floors, two stages, two microbrew-bearing bars, and some of the biggest names in now music. 2/24: Matt Shipp and Rashid Bakr; Roger Miller's Binary System. 2/25: Isotope 217 (see page 87); the Lonesome Organist. 2/27: 16 Horse Power. 2/28: Lambchop (see page 89); Vic Chesnutt. 74 *Leonard St., bet. Broadway and Church St. (219-3055).*

Life—Okay, we give. It *is* the only hip place on Bleecker Street, even if the doormen can get a little tough on those they deem unworthy. What bouncers aren't? *158 Bleecker St. (420-1999).*

Manny's Car Wash—A little Chicago on the Upper East Side. Mondays, beware salivating yuppie swells here for ladies' night. Every Sunday, it's Manny's World Famous Blues. 2/25: Commander Cody & His Lost Planet Airmen. 2/26: Big Brother & the Holding Company. 2/27: The Susan Tedeschi Band. 3/2: The Bill Perry Band. 3/3: Benefit for Stan Bronstein. *1558 Third Ave., bet. 87th and 88th Sts. (369-BLUES).*

Mercury Lounge—Once a headstone parlor, now one of the city's hippest and most congenial music spots, hosting rock and country artists groomed for the more au courant time slots of MTV. 2/25–2/26: The Bogmen. 2/27: Jon Langford & the Skull Orchard. 2/28: Fronted by the nineties' undersung romantic hero, Stephen Merritt, the Magnetic Fields alchemize eighties synth-pop into timeless tear-jerkers. 3/2: Betty; Francis Dunnery. *217 E. Houston St. (260-4700).*

The Roxy—Having put in a surprise appearance last week, Madonna is unlikely to reappear at her cavernous old Chelsea haunt for at least another decade or so. But another eighties relic remains: the mysteriously underattended Tuesday- and Wednesday-night rollerskating jam, which keeps the boogie queens' wheels spinning till the wee hours. *515 W. 18th St. (627-0404). $.*

S.O.B.'s—The city's premier world-music venue, presenting many acts that could fill stadia back home. Most nights, sets at 10 and midnight. 2/26: Ras Daveed & Providence; Hassan Hakmoun. 2/27: Marion Meadows. *204 Varick St. (243-4940).*

The Supper Club—A large, grand ballroom with a starry ceiling and challenging acoustics. Every Friday and Saturday, the Tony Corbiscello Big Band gets the room swinging, lindy-hopping, and otherwise engaging in social behaviors of yesteryear (look for guest appearances by John Pizzarelli and other bona fide big names), after which the next generation takes over, to ever-more-vigorous dancing. The Flying Neutrinos play Saturday evenings in January. Too much hopping got you pooped? Take a load off in the upstairs Blue Room Lounge. *240 W. 47th St. (921-1940).*

Tramps—One of the city's better venues for great roots music and happening indie rock, Tramps eschews high concept for straightforward presentation. Avoid the neck-craning mid-stage column by arriving early. 2/24: Jim Lauderdale; Ralph Stanley; Hackberry Ramblers. 2/25: Porn- and medicine-obsessed rapper Kool Keith has one of the strongest flows going, whether on recent undertakings like last year's critically lauded Dr. Octagon album *Octagynecologist* or with his old crew, the Ultramagnetic MC's. This show features the latter. With Company Flow. 2/27: Bespectacled J. D. Salinger aficionado Lisa Loeb, with her unpretentiously named backing band, Nine Stories. 2/28: Buckwheat Zydeco; the Holmes Brothers. *51 W. 21st St. (727-7788).*

Wetlands—A groovy club-kid activist hang with neo-hippie atmosphere and far-flung musical guests. N.B.: Tuesday night is (Grateful) Dead Night. 2/26: Screaming Cheetah Wheelies. 2/28: Agents of Good Roots; Moon Boot Lover. *161 Hudson St. (966-5244).*

Jazz

Birdland—More comfortable than the Blue Note, swankier than the Vanguard, and proof that jazz is alive and well in midtown, this classy boîte serves up some fine southern cuisine along with its first-rate lineup. Every Monday night, the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra. Every Friday the Lew Anderson Big Band swings from 5:30 to 7:30. 2/24: The Famous Duke Ellington Orchestra directed by Paul Ellington. 2/25: Carla White. 2/26–2/28: Jacky Terrasson Trio. Sets at 9 and 11 P.M. *315 W. 44th St. (581-3080).*

Blue Note—With a first-rate sound system and a decent view from every seat in the house, the "jazz capital of the world" often presents two top-flight artists in one evening. Sets at 9 and 11:30 P.M. 2/24–3/1: Michel Camilo Trio; Danilo Perez Trio. 3/2: Jim Cifelli. *131 W. 3rd St. (475-8592).*

Dharma—Funky jazz on the historic shopping thoroughfare—just don't pay retail. 2/25: Gregory Tardy Trio. 2/26: Avram Fafer Quartet. 2/27–2/28: Myron Walden Trio. *174 Orchard St., bet. Houston and Stanton Sts. (780-0313).*

Iridium—Merlot, the artfully wacky restaurant across from Lincoln Center, hosts some formidable jazz comers in its cozy basement, along with the occasional legend. Monday nights, the Les Paul Trio holds office hours. 2/24–3/1: Dick Hyman Trio. Sets at 8:30 and 10:30, Sun.–Thurs., with extra midnight set Fri. and Sat. *44 W. 63rd St., across from Lincoln Center (582-2121).*

The Jazz Standard—Midtown south's newest, biggest, and happeningest hangout for hard-boppers and the men and women who love them. You can't hear the bands from the swanky first-floor restaurant, but the basement club's modified menu should more than suffice. 2/24–3/1: The Larry Goldings Organ Trio. Sets Sun., Tues.–Thurs. at 8 P.M. and 10 P.M., Fri. and Sat. at 8 P.M., 10:30 P.M., and midnight; $10–$15 cover on weekdays, $15–$20 cover on Fri. and Sat. *116 E. 27th St. (576-2232).*

Knickerbocker Bar & Grill—A wood-paneled and brass-railed restaurant with Old New York ambience and excellent—occasionally legendary—pianists. 2/25–2/28: Steve Kuhn, David Finck, and Billy Drummond. *33 University Pl. (228-8490).*

Red Blazer—Reopened in a new spot, the famed Theater District jazzerie continues to offer up fine sounds. Monday: Rick Hardeman and his New Orleans Jazz All Stars. Tuesday: Kelly Freizin Jazz Band. Wednesday: Sunny Daniels Swing All Stars. Thursday: Stan Rubin and His Swing Sextet. Friday: Sam Ulando and the Bourbon Street Jazz Band. Saturday: Bob Cantwell and the Stompers. *32 W. 37th St. (262-3112).*

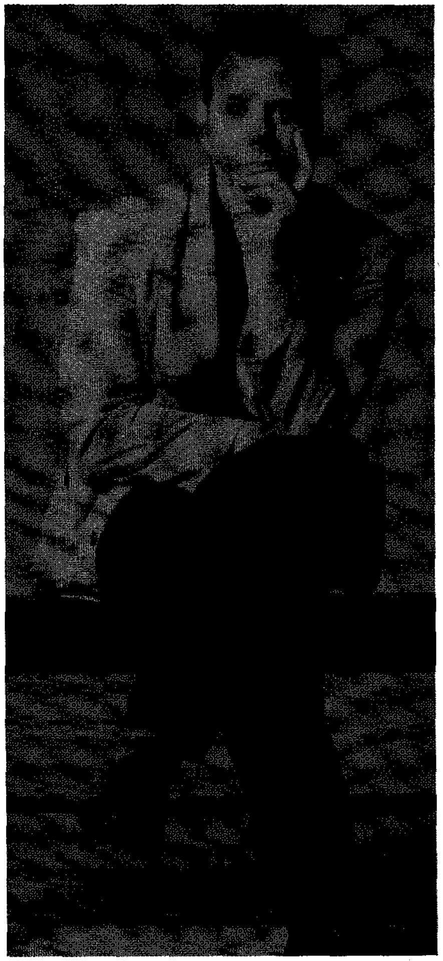
Showman's Cafe—Harlem's subtly wonderful jazz club, where you can always get a table and the jukebox is one of the best in the city. Every Thursday, sixties organ great Reuben Wilson leads his heady trio. Sets at 10 P.M., midnight, and 2 A.M. No cover; two-drink minimum. *2321 Eighth Ave., bet. 124th and 125th Sts. (864-8941). $.*

Small's—Extremely cozy and open all night, offering after-hours jazz until 8 A.M. It's a candlelit basement whose nightly jams start round about 2 A.M.—the perfect time for a post–Village Vanguard visit (it's right around the corner)—and often involve free beverages and food. Every Sunday, the Jazz Composers Forum, followed by the Across Seventh Street Septet. Every Monday, Jason Lindner's youthful, Ellington-meets-Mingus big band. Tuesdays, cerebral and atmospheric guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel leads his quartet. Shows start at 10 P.M. *183 W. 10th St. (929-7565). $.*

Sweet Basil—An intimate downtown restaurant with good food and high-profile jazz acts. Every Saturday, jazz brunch with Ilhan Ersahin. Sundays, Chuck Folds hosts "the original jazz brunch." Every Monday, it's the Spirit of Life Ensemble. Sets at 9 and 11 P.M., with extra sets Fri. and Sat. at 12:30 A.M. 2/24–3/1: Johnny King Quintet. *88 Seventh Ave. So., at Bleecker St. (242-1785).*

Tavern on the Green—A somewhat overwrought restaurant in a touristy Central Park rest stop, the Tavern's Chestnut Room is still a top-flight jazz club—with excellent sound and a full roster of stars. *Central Park at W. 67th St. (873-3200).*

Village Vanguard—Perhaps the world's greatest jazz club, and certainly the most steeped in history, this dark, smoky institution is revered by fans around the world.



Talent
Blue Traveler

Brooklyn singer-pianist Lee Feldman brings his bag of taut, finely observed Harry Nilsson–meets–Fats Waller heartbreakers to Fez on March 3.

Photograph by Joanne Savio.

Study the photos of jazz icons, dig the curtains Miles Davis once played to, and sneak a glance inside the kitchen, an Algonquin Round Table for the bop age. Mondays, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. Sets at 9:30 and 11:30 P.M. 2/24–3/1: James Carter Quartet. *178 Seventh Ave. So., at W. 11th St. (255-4037). $.*

Zinc Bar—A tiny subterranean hideout, sheltered from bustling Houston Street by heavy red drapes. Weeknights, sets at 10 P.M., midnight, and 2 A.M.; weekends at 11 P.M., 12:30 A.M., and 2 A.M. Mondays, the Ron Affif Trio. Fridays: Raf Astor's flamenco band. Saturdays: Marianne Ebert's Brazilian-jazz quartet. *90 W. Houston St. (477-8337). $.*

Zinno—A pretty Italian restaurant with a tiny piano on its awning, Zinno is more dining spot than jazz club, though its musical guests are often pleasant surprises. Shows Mon.–Sat. at 8 P.M. 2/24–2/28: Bucky Pizzarelli; John Brunch; Jay Leonhart. *126 W. 13th St. (924-5182).*

Comedy

Boston Comedy Club—*Animal House* ambience and, most nights, comedy to match. Sundays: "All Star Comedy." Mondays: Open-mike night hosted by David J. Tuesday–Thursday, shows at 9:30 P.M. Fridays and Saturdays, the club promises "the country's top comedians," with shows at 8, 10, and midnight. *82 W. 3rd St. (477-1000).*

Carolines Comedy Club—In Times Square just down the street from the *Letterman* show, Carolines hosts big names and talented up-and-comers in its wide, elegant, TV-studio-like basement. 2/25–27: *MTV Jams* host and Ritalin poster-boy Bill Bellamy. 2/27–3/1: Allan Havey. Mondays and Tuesdays, "New Talent Night," hosted by Eddie Brill. *1626 Broadway, bet. 49th and 50th Sts. (757-4100). $12.50–$18.50, two-drink minimum.*

Catch a Rising Star—The high-class variety showplace has broadened its focus from straight stand-up to a mix of sketch and alternative comedy, theater, and musical performances. Friday's "The Big Bad Music Show" explores that riskiest of all entertainment territory, humor-rock. Shows Tues. at 8:30 P.M.; Wed. and Thurs. at 9 P.M.; Fri. and Sat. at 9 and 11 P.M. *253 W. 28th St., (244-3005).*

Chicago City Limits—The long-running and much-ballyhooed troupe, performing their latest, "@ChicagoCityLimits.comedy." Wed.–Thurs. at 8:30 P.M., Fri.–Sat. at 8:30 and 10:30 P.M. $20 cover. *Chicago City Limits Theatre, 1105 First Ave., at 61st St. (888-LAFF).*

Comedy Cellar—A physical throwback to sixties Village coffeehouses, this is the late-night subterranean haunt of many of the city's top comics. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11 P.M.; Sat. at 8:30 P.M., 10:15 P.M., and 12 A.M.; and Sun–Thurs. at 9 P.M. 2/23–3/1: Mitch Fatel; Gregg Rogell; Dave Attell; Jim Norton; Robert H. Kelly. *117 MacDougal St. (254-3480).*

Comic Strip—Probably the most expertly booked club in the city, this showcase offers an eclectic mix of comedians every night of the week. *1568 Second Ave., bet. 81st and 82nd Sts. (861-9386).*

Dangerfield's—Founded by the respect-deprived comedian two decades ago, this Vegas-style lounge is one of the city's oldest comedy establishments. Fri. at 9 and 11:15 P.M.; Sat. at 8 P.M., 10:30 P.M., and 12:30 A.M.; Sun.–Thurs., continuous from 8:45 P.M. Cover is $15 Fri. and Sat.; $12.50 on weeknights; no minimum. 2/23–3/1: Al Lubell; Richie Byrne; Rich Ramirez; Lenny Varnedoe; Jim Norton; Joe Mulligan; Nancy Redman. *1118 First Ave., bet. 61st and 62nd Sts. (593-1650).*

Gotham—An elegant, trendy, and palatial comedy spot in the Flatiron district. Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 P.M.; Fri. at 9 and 11P.M. and Sat. at 8:30 and 10:30 P.M. Cover is $12 Fri. and Sat., $8 on weeknights. Two-drink minimum. 2/27–2/28: Jim Gaffigan; Greg Giraldo; Jim David. *34 W. 22nd St. (367-9000).*

Luna Lounge—At Monday night's "Eating It," young, hip comedians like the Upright Citizens Brigade work out the kinks in their material to grateful audiences—after all, it's free. *171 Ludlow St. (260-2323).*

New York Comedy Club—Every Friday, the NYCC presents "New York's Best African-American and Latino Comics." Every Wed. and Thurs., there's sketch comedy at 7 P.M. Shows Mon.–Fri. at 9, with extra shows Fri. at 7 and 11 P.M.; Sat. at 6, 7:30, 9:30, and 11:45 P.M. *241 E. 24th St. (696-5233).*

Stand-up New York—Robin Williams is known to drop by here unannounced to warm up for his *Letterman* appearances. Shows: Sun.–Thurs. at 7; Fri.–Sat. at 7, 9, and 11:30 P.M. 2/27–2/28: Todd Barry; Sue Costello; Greg Carey; Rich Voss. *236 W. 78th St. (595-0850). $7–$12.*

Cabaret

Asti—Singing-waiter frolics, with an emphasis on opera and operetta, are the keynote of this Village landmark. *13 E. 12th St. (741-9105).*

Bemelmans Bar—Singer-pianist Peter Mintun plays standard through May. $10 music charge; no minimum. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600).*

Cafe Carlyle—Through 3/7: Eartha Kitt. Call for reservations. Every Monday, Woody Allen swings through the early set with Eddy Davis & His New Orleans Jazz Band. Sets at 8:45 and 10:45 P.M. $50 ($25 for Davis's late, Woody-free set); no minimum. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600).*

Cafe Pierre—Singer-pianist Kathleen Landis. $12 minimum; jacket and tie required. *Fifth Ave. at 61st St. (940-8195).*

Don't Tell Mama—2/27: Drag vocal outfit 3 Sheets to the Wind, on their "Shut Up and Eat Your Spinach" tour. $10–$15 cover, two-drink minimum. *343 W. 46th St. (757-0788). $.*

Eighty-Eight's—A West Village venue whose unassuming façade conceals a top-notch little theater within. Sundays, Rohn Seykell continues his wildly popular run. 3/3: Steve Hayes and Tom Cayler. $15, with a two-drink minimum. *228 W. 10th St. (924-0088).*

FireBird Café—The theater district's newest post-show snuggery. 3/3–3/7: Car-rental moguless turned chanteuse Yanna Avis, with Colin Romoff. Tues.–Thurs., sets at 9 P.M. Fri. and Sat., sets at 9 and 11 P.M. $30 cover; two-drink minimum. *363 W. 46th St. (586-0244).*

The Park Bistro—Tenor Chris Barrett serves up chestnuts of the American songbook in this swanky midtown lounge. No cover; no minimum. *109 E. 56th St. (750-5656).*

Rainbow and Stars—Romance, prewar charm, and wood paneling, hundreds of feet above midtown. Tues.–Sat. at 8:30 and 11 P.M.; seating for dinner is at 6:30 P.M. 2/24–3/28: "Rhythm on the Rainbow . . . The Hot Harmonies of the Boswell Sisters." *30 Rockefeller Plaza, 65th floor (632-5000).*

Sardi's—Fridays, comic, singer, dancer, and pianist Mark Nadler performs numbers from his 3,000-song repertoire of standards, show tunes and other theater-district fare. $15 cover; $12 minimum. *234 W. 44th St. (221-8444).*

Bars

Holiday Cocktail Lounge—Neither the capricious, ornery old drunk behind the bar nor the sound system that magically strips all music of everything but its bass line can detract from this dive's key selling points: $20 buys more beer than one person can carry; and there's always plenty of room at the tables. Bottoms up! *75 St. Marks Pl. (777-9637).*

J. J. Beckett's—With the exception of the occasional overenthusiastic undergrad, most of the folks at the bar look as though they deserve a drink. On Wednesday nights, this Naugahyde-and-pressboard dive hosts the James Begian Three, an earnest, low-key trio that lends plenty of atmosphere. Finally, a destination bar on the Upper West Side that's not a pathetically phony friends-in-low-places theme bar. *Amsterdam Ave., at 90th St. (787-9628).*

The Rainbow Promenade—Head bartender Dale Degroff has been creating cocktails and perfecting the classics for years, and nothing beats the view at sunset. The line starts on Thursday and lasts all weekend, so drop by early in the week. *30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5100).*

Talent

Nashville Narcotic

"That makes my day," crows Lambchop singer-guitarist Kurt Wagner. "You just made my whole week!" Wagner's unfeigned enthusiasm might seem a little surprising given that I've just told him the title track of his alt-country band's new *Thriller* CD put me to sleep. Twice. But since the song was inspired by a nap Wagner took on a tour of Europe, well, he takes it as quite a compliment. True to their leader's somnolent vision, Lambchop's twelve members pride themselves on restraint, using their vast numbers to craft subtle, twangy atmospherics out of guitars, strings, horns, and assorted musical gewgaws. (In the band's rare live appearances, things can get a little noisier. So Wagner now has one of the group's four guitarists play from a dressing room to keep the sound under control.) On paper, Lambchop might come off more cerebral and arty than your typical Grand Ole Opry fare, but Wagner does consider the outfit a country band. "The longer we hang around Nashville, it's interesting to watch our credibility grow," he observes. "A lot of conversations go on here about what is and isn't country." *Thriller,* though, may bump Lambchop back to Nashville square one: The new album replaces many of its two predecessors' pedal-steel sighs with some soul-music trappings, and adds cheeky bite to Wagner's usual tales of rural isolation—as on the horns-and-guitar rave-up "Your Fucking Sunny Day." And what about naming an album after Michael Jackson's magnum opus? "It *does* have a kind of spooky, soundtracky quality to it," Wagner coyly maintains. He brings "the full hee-haw gang" to the Knitting Factory February 28.

ETHAN SMITH

Photograph courtesy of Merge Records.

the mix

Hughes on Plath: A Symposium...*Samson et Dalila*, Live

John Leonard's TV Notes

A Touch of Frost: No Other Love (2/24; 9 to 11 P.M.; A&E) is the last in a series starring David Jason as the Edinburgh police inspector whose eccentric investigating methods and wayward domestic life get him into almost as much trouble as the victims of the crimes he will invariably solve. You can see the triple-twist coming in this story of the seemingly senseless murder of a pawnbroker, the cold fury of his retired army-captain father, the traumatized silence of the various children, and the downsizing of the police department, which may or may not include Jack Frost himself. But the model trains run on time, to a huge sadness.

America in the 40s (2/25; 8 to 11 P.M.; Channel 13) is not quite the once-over-lightly I expected from a *Reader's Digest* production. To be sure, there's more music than there is war, but Studs Terkel has been studied to keep the mini-series honest, there's a decent stab at multicultural perspectives, mention is made of coal mines and zoot suits, working mothers get a hearing, and the suburbs are perceived as other than utopian. Charles Durning, who scoots us along in this whirlwind tour, is never less than affable, but not at all a Santa Claus. If the Holocaust somehow slips our mind, we at least notice that swing included lynching.

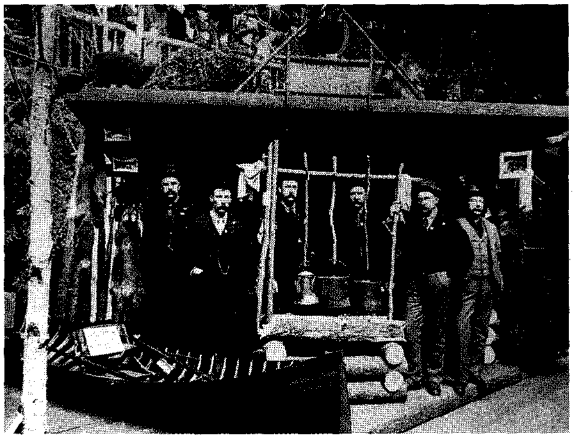
Ellen (2/25; 9:30 to 10 P.M.; ABC) leads us, with Harvey Fierstein impersonating Rod Serling, into a Twilight Zone in which Spence (Jeremy Piven) wakes up from an insecticide-induced stupor into a "Gay, Gay, Gay, Gay World" in which "stiff wrist" straights are an abused minority, Madonna is president, Paul McCartney has married Joe Namath, Dennis Rodman is pictured on a $3 bill, and *Mad About You* shows up on television with a parental advisory. Some of these jokes, as you might expect, are not as funny as others, but a couple are actually subversive.

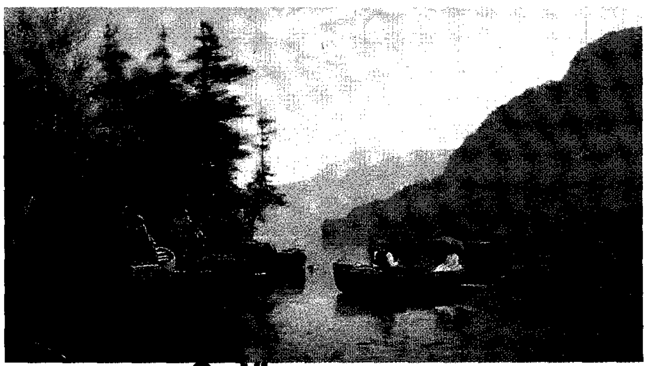
Virtual Obsession (2/26; 8 to 11 P.M.; ABC) has the bad luck to follow by only 11 days the Feb. 15 episode of *The X-Files*, written by cyberpunk forefather William Gibson, about a Bill Gates sort of software hacker genius who lets loose on the Internet an artificial intelligence more dangerous than any virus, into which several human beings disappear—though not quite Fox Mulder. Because I've seen only a rough cut of the three-hour ABC movie, I can't say for sure that it's puerile by comparison. (Special effects will be added.) But by comparison it's certainly witless. Trying with a supercomputer to interface meat and machine unto immortality, Peter Gallagher risks not only Salt Lake City but also his marriage to Mimi Rogers. He should have known from her red hair not to trust Bridgette Wilson, the Femme Fatale Attraction. And before writing their teleplay, Mick Garris and Preston Sturges (son of the late great) ought to have consulted, if not Gibson, then Pat Cadigan (*Synners*) or Neal Stephenson (*Snow Crash*).

The Sweetest Gift (2/28; 7:30 to 9 P.M.; Showtime) takes its time in getting the white family of single mom Helen Shaver together with the black family of matriarch Diahann Carroll for a rural Florida holiday airing of their differing perspectives and grievances, but after some goat-sex, some baseball, and some history lessons, a candy business will be born and just maybe the children will improve the world their parents have so mismanaged. Tisha Campbell certainly encourages one to hope so in this estimable Showtime kids' flick.

Midnight in Saint Petersburg (2/28; 9 to 10:30 P.M.; TMC) is a slight improvement on last year's *Bullet to Beijing*, the first Movie Channel retread of Michael Caine as Len Deighton's Harry Palmer looking for freelance work in the post–Cold War era—but mainly because of its shamelessly travelogueing through an exceedingly picturesque if erstwhile Leningrad. If Caine is too old to be taking on the Russian mafia and the Moscow circus and sundry excessive terrorists, all of whom want both enriched plutonium and paintings from the Hermitage, plus, of course, a comely Bolshoi ballerina (Tanya Jackson), the Winter Palace is still spectacular, and Michael Gambon gets some growly work, and Sean Connery's son Jason has some dimpled zip.

Glory & Honor (3/1; 8 to 10 P.M.; TNT), although a day late for Black History Month, rescues Matthew Henson (Delroy Lindo) from anonymity. It was the African-American Henson, as the constant companion and personal valet of Commander Robert E. Peary (Henry Czerny) on every frostbitten try for the North Pole, who learned how to talk to Inuits, wear a polar-bear suit, and pilot a dog sled. If he had to wait around until 1988 to be dug up from a New York grave and re-interred next to Peary in Arlington National Cemetery, at least he lived a couple of decades longer than his glory-hounding boss and, at least on television, got to marry Kim Staunton. It's also nice to see Lindo, a longtime also-ran in supporting roles, get the lead for once. And the Arctic Circle location shots are enough to chill out the Egyptian sun-god Ra.





On View

Green Acres (and Acres)

Central Park has generated its share of lore over the years, so imagine how much there is to say—and show—about the Adirondack region, which covers a fifth of New York State. "A Central Park for the World: New York's Adirondack Park" includes Hudson River School paintings, Currier and Ives lithographs, handmade canoes, and furniture indigenous to the area. It's on display at the PaineWebber Art Gallery through April 3.

Radio Highlights

City Folk—2/24: Mardi Gras with Dr. John, Geno Delafose, the Neville Brothers, Professor Longhair, the New Birth Brass Band, Subdudes, Allen Toussaint, and others. WFUV, 90.7 FM.

New York & Company—Weekdays at 2 P.M. 2/23: Chuck Close; Randall Robinson. 2/24: Danny Stiles; Hackberry Ramblers. 2/25: Richard Lederer; Sir Ian McEwan. 2/26: Marlo Thomas; Toni Morrison. Leonard Lopate is the host. WNYC AM; 820.

The Lewis Burke Frumkes Show—Sundays at 8 P.M. 2/22: The guest is P. D. James, author of *A Certain Justice*. WNWK, 105.9 FM.

The Written Word

Maurice Vellekoop's Storybook Hour—3/1 at 3 P.M.: Award-winning illustrator on his book *Maurice Vellekoop's ABC Book* and *Vellevision*. A Different Light, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850); free.

Photographs courtesy of the PaineWebber Art Gallery.

Helen Vendler—2/26 at 6:30 P.M.: Reading from *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets.* Temple Israel, 112 E. 75th St. (717-0357); $15.

Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger—3/2 at 6 P.M.: Reading from *The Art of Speedreading People.* Borders Books & Music, 5 World Trade Center between Church and Vesey Sts. (522-6810); free.

"Far From Home: Baseball, Brooklyn, and the Civil War"—2/25 at 6:30 P.M.: The "Gotham Readers" reimagine the exploits of the 14th Regiment. Author Thomas Dyja reads from *Play for a Kingdom.* The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (534-1672); $9.

Charles North and Eugene Richie—3/2 at 7 P.M.: Reading from recent work. KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (505-3360); free.

Stone & Steel: Paintings and Writings Celebrating the Bridges of New York City—3/3 at 6:15 P.M.: With Kate Rushin, Elizabeth Macklin, Vickie Karp, and Mary Susan Hammond. NYU's Bobst Library, 70 Washington Sq. South (998-2596); free.

"Tales Out of School"—2/25 at 6:30 P.M.: Readings by Lois Smith, Ally Sheedy, and Mia Dillon from the work of Shirley Jackson and others. Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway (864-5400); $17.

Edna O'Brien—2/26 at 7: Reading from *Down by the River.* NYU's Tishman Auditorium, Vanderbilt Hall, 40 Washington Sq. South (996-8816); free.

Peter Trachtenberg—2/24 at 7 P.M.: Reading from *Seven Tattoos.* KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (420-0816); free.

Robert Pinsky—2/23 at 7:30 P.M.: Presenting "The *Inferno* of Dante: A Staged Reading." Manhattan Theatre Club at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (399-3030); $12.

George Bradley and Carl Dennis—2/23 at 7:30 P.M.: Reading from their poetry. KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (505-3360); free.

Traveling Stories—2/23 at 8: With Marry Morris, Candido Tirado, Carmen Rivera, and others. Nuyorican Poets' Cafe, 236 E. 3rd St. (627-6920); $7.

Lectures and Panels

The Personal Essay Today: Experience to Expression—2/23 at 6: *The Hudson Review* (a magazine of literature and the arts currently celebrating its fiftieth anniversary) invites you to this panel discussion co-sponsored by the New York University Department of English. Participants are Joseph Epstein (editor of *The Norton Book of Personal Essays*), Louis Simpson, and Susan Balée. *The Hudson Review's* Paula Deitz introduces. Jurow Hall, Room 101-A, 100 Washington Square East (650-0020); free.

"An Afternoon With John Milton"—3/1 at 3: Readings, music and conversation in celebration of Milton and the fine arts in general. 31 Jane St., Suite 17B (741-2417); $10.

Veronica Gonzalez and Mark von Shlegell—2/28 at 4: Reading from their recent work. Nuyorican Poets' Cafe, 236 E. 3rd St. (219-3198); $6.

"Manhattan: Creating Culture"—2/26 at 6 P.M.: A centennial conversation hosted by Leonard Lopate with Stanley Crouch, Kenneth T. Jackson, and Kitty Carlisle Hart. The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. (534-1272); $5.

"*King Lear*: Shakespeare's Quarrel With God"—2/24 at 6:15 P.M.: With Charles E. Pierce Jr. Pierpont Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008); $20 for series of two.

"How to Make It to Broadway"—2/24 at 6:30 P.M.: Advice from Reg E. Gaines, Tony-nominated writer and lyricist of *Bring In 'da Noise, Bring In 'da Funk.* The Learning Annex, 16 E. 53rd St. (371-0280); $39.

"Pacific Crossings: Asian Influences in American Restaurants"—2/26 at 6:30 P.M.: Nina Griscom moderates a panel discussion of restaurateurs and chefs. Asia Society, 725 Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-ASIA); $15.

Ursula Biemann—2/24 at 6 P.M.: A discussion of "Just Watch," an Internet project devoted to examining representations of women in electronic media. The Great Hall at Cooper Union, 7th St at Third Ave. (353-4195); $10.

"The World of the Country Russian Estate"—2/24 at 6 P.M.: A slide lecture by Priscilla Roosevelt. The New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (930-0654); $10.

"Judaism for a Secular Age: Non-Theistic Alternatives for Jewish Life and Continuity"—2/28 at 9:45 A.M.: A daylong conference on the principles and practices of Humanistic Judaism, with workshops on intermarriage, raising Jewish children in a secular home, and non-theistic celebrations of Jewish holidays. Village Community School, 272 W. 10th St. (713-5031); $35.

Is There an American Cuisine?—2/24 at 7: Chefs Larry Forgione and Waldy Malouf and food writers Jane and Michael Stern raise and, presumably, attempt to answer this question. The New School, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5600); $15.

Alan Bennett and A. R. Gurney—2/23 at 8 P.M.: The playwrights discuss their work, which includes, respectively, *Beyond the Fringe, An Englishman Abroad,* and *The Madness of King George,* and *Richard Cory, The Golden Age,* and *Love Letters.* 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $15.

The U.S. in the World Economy—2/25 at 7:30 P.M.: Part of the series "Past, Present, Future—Reflections and Predictions." 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $18.

Ariel Dorfman and Tomás Eloy Martínez—3/2 at 8 P.M.: The South American writers read their work with translators. At the Unterberg Poetry Center, 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $12.

Gary Sinise at the Actors Studio—2/23 at 7:30: An in-depth interview about the actor's life and career. The New School, Tishman Auditorium, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5859); $245 for seven sessions with various actors.

Tours

"African-Americans in New York Colonial Times"—2/28 at 1 P.M.: In honor of Black History Month, an exploration of historic sites including the New York slave markets and the underground railroad. For information and meeting place, call 718-721-5254; $12.

"Greenwich Village I"—2/28 at 1 P.M.: A tour focusing on the village in the 1910s and 1960s. Stops include Emma Goldman's House, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, Stonewall, and more. Meet at the Arch in Washington Square Park (718-492-0069); $10.

"The East Village"—3/1 at 2 P.M.: A tour of what was once the farm of Dutch governor Peter Stuyvesant. Meet at the Astor Place subway kiosk (969-8262); $10.

Exhibitions

Bridging New York—Through 6/28: Selections from the museum's painting, print, and photographic collections dealing with the city's bridges. The Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. (534-1672); suggested contribution $5.

"Proudly We Served"—Through 9/5: Photographs, artifacts, and models commemorating 200 years of service by African-American veterans. Intrepid Sea Air Space Museum, Pier 86, W. 46th St. (957-7055); $10.

Navigating the Underground Railroad—Through 3/3: An exploration of the ways slaves interpreted landscape and utilized nature to survive as they traveled to freedom. The Charles A. Dana Discovery Center, Fifth Ave. at 110th St. (860-1370); free.

50 Years of "The Subway Sun"—Through 3/22: An exhibit of the poster series "The Subway Sun," which regularly inspired and admonished passengers on everything from their patriotic duty to proper underground etiquette. New York Transit Museum, Boerum Pl. and Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn Heights (718-243-8601); $3.

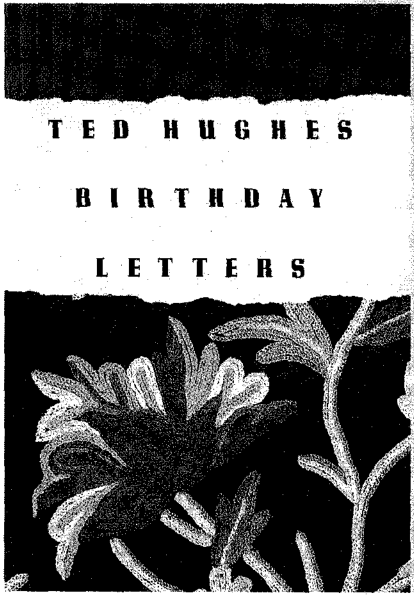
Assignment: Rescue—Through 3/29: "The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee" commemorates Varian Fry, an American relief worker responsible for rescuing nearly 2,000 Jews and opponents of the Nazis, including Marc Chagall, André Breton, and Hannah Arendt, from Vichy France during World War II. Though Fry's

Happening

Birthday Gift

In her essay on Sylvia Plath, critic Elizabeth Hardwick mentioned that she had never learned anything from a poetry reading—"unless the clothes, the beard, the girls, the poor or good condition of the poet can be considered a kind of knowledge." A symposium on Ted Hughes's new book of poems might seem even more dubious: *Birthday Letters* has tabloid potential—esteemed living poet breaks silence on esteemed dead poet and first wife, golden-girl suicide Sylvia Plath. Mercifully, though, for its February 26 discussion of the book, the Academy of American Poets has assembled a subdued and inveterately literary panel. Among the participants are Fran McCullough, who edited all of Plath's posthumously published work, and Bonnie Costello, author of books on Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop. Flying in from London is poet and critic A. Alvarez. "It's an important book," Alvarez says, only to promptly correct himself. "Importance isn't important," he explains, paraphrasing philosopher John Austin. "*Truth* is. *Birthday Letters* is a really lovely book....Out of this disaster a lot of very good poetry has emerged." Alvarez is politely uninterested in talking about what he hopes to get out of the discussion—which is excellent news for the audience. A paradox about staged book chat is that those who don't much care for it tend to be most worth hearing, just as a writer who refuses to speak about his work—Hughes has had no comment on *Birthday Letters*—is probably most deserving of talk. *(Call 274-0343.)*

LINDA HALL



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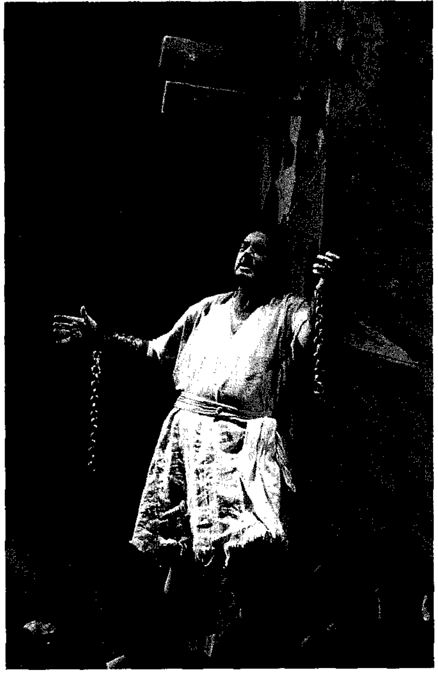
On Air **Anticipated with fervid hand-wringing, received with critical acclaim (see Peter Davis's review, page 54), the Metropolitan Opera's extravagant new production of *Samson et Dalila* is broadcast live February 28 at 1:30 on WQXR, 96.3 FM; Plácido Domingo (below) stars.**



efforts are not as well known as those of Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler, his accomplishments are no less riveting. The exhibit is composed largely of historic photographs, artifacts, and related works of art. The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (423-3200); $7.

New York From Above: An Aerial View—Through 6/14: An exhibit of 26 paintings by contemporary painter and geographer Spelman Evans Downer that chart the evolution of Greater Gotham over the past 100 years. His work depicts historical landscapes before extensive urbanization as well as space-age satellite views of Manhattan. The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (534-1672); $5 suggested contribution.

Mechanical Marvels: Invention in the Age of Leonardo—Through 3/1: This exhibit brings back to life the "Renaissance of the Machine" that swept Europe in the fifteenth century, with large-scale silkscreen reproductions of original drawings, 50 remarkable working models, and a number of multimedia and virtual-reality stations. The show concentrates on the inventions of Filippo Brunelleschi, Taccola, Francesco di Giorgio, and Leonardo da Vinci. On view at the Liberty Street gallery at the World Financial Center. Tues.–Fri. 11 a.m.–6 p.m., Sat. and Sun. noon–5 p.m. (945-0505); $6.

Benefits

An Evening for Families—3/1 at 5 P.M.: Readings by celebrities, interactive craft and activity booths, giveaways and goody bags, and plenty of food to benefit Literacy Partners. Christie's, Park Ave. at 59th St. (522-0640); $50 per individual, $200 per family.

Sports

Ask Not for Whom the Camp-bell Tolls—While you're reading this, Rangers coach Colin Campbell is probably reading the want ads. General manager Neil Smith has spent most of the season looking for a good time to dump Campbell, it was reported last week, and is finally going to pull the trigger. The move is long overdue. The Rangers have been chafing in their blue shirts under Campbell's conservative leadership and everyone has been in a season-long slump. They have yet to put together a significant winning streak and are currently outside the playoff bubble behind teams like Ottawa and Buffalo. No, the lugubrious hockey perpetually on display at the Garden is not completely Campbell's fault, but when a team with names like LaFontaine, Gretzky, Leetch, and Richter has scraped together just seventeen wins, you know the problem is bigger than team chemistry. *See Game Week for team schedules.*

Powerful Women in Sports—2/26 at 4:30 P.M.: The Nets and Chase will host this benefit forum for the Women's Sports Foundation directly preceding the Nets game. Five prominent women in the sports business, including Liberty president Carol Blazejowski and ESPN anchor Robin Roberts, will share their success stories and field questions. Continental Arena. Free with paid Nets ticket. For information call 800-7NJ-NETS.

Online

New York Magazine on the Web—Follow the links from "Stephanie's Surf Report" (in the "Today" section of www.newyorkmag.com) to a new Website pick every day. This week: See the largest gathering of Jews ever in cyberspace (oy vey!) for Jewish Web Week; celebrate Black History Month with Britannica Online; create your own clan through a Web-based virtual-reality game; send e-mail to your favorite Olympian; and take your children into the kids-only world of Disney's Daily Blast. While you're visiting us at www.nymag.com, tune into our latest Web exclusives, including daily picks of New York events in "Vanessa Takes Manhattan," Web-only book reviews, neighborhood guides, and more. Plus, selected articles from the current issue, archives from your favorite critics and columnists, and an expanded "Cue" section.

GAME WEEK

HOME ▨ AWAY ▨

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
RANGERS				TOR MSGII 7:30PM		PHI FOX 3PM	
ISLANDERS			DAL SC 7:30PM				BOS SC 2PM
DEVILS			FLA SC 7:30PM	TAM SC 7:30PM		CAR SC 7:30PM	
KNICKS		GS MSG 7:30PM		MIL MSG 7:30PM			LAL NBC 1PM
NETS		VAN SC 7:30PM		SAC SC 7:30PM		MIA SC 1PM	MIA SC 7:30PM
	2/23	2/24	2/25	2/26	2/27	2/28	3/1

Photograph by Winnie Klotz/Metropolitan Opera.

kids

Yellow Feathers...Green Tights

Ground Rules:

● = free

● = now or never (one-shot deal or final week)

Children's Events

Big Bird, Live—Bert, Ernie, Elmo, and friends' gleeful 90-minute Broadway-style extravaganza *Sesame Street Live: Let's Play School* deconstructs the classroom experience for tots. Through 3/1. **MADISON SQUARE GARDEN,** 2 Pennsylvania Plaza (307-7171); $12.50–$27. ●

Faraway—With the peacock and sword dances, the Chinese Folk Dance Company interprets classical and folk traditions for a family audience. Its performance complements *China: 5,000 Years,* currently on exhibit. Tickets—free with museum admission—are available on a first-come-first-served basis. 2/28 at 2. **SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM,** 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (423 3500); $8, $5 for seniors and students.●

High Five—Cultural events of every stripe become wonderfully affordable to junior- and senior-high-school students through the end of May. Under the auspices of High 5, nearly 6,000 tickets to events at New York's leading cultural institutions cost $5 weekends ($5 buys two tickets on weeknights). The full range of offerings: jazz, opera, classical music, art exhibits, ballet, contemporary dance, Off Broadway theater, comedy, performance art, and film are listed in a High 5 catalogue, which is available free of charge. Pick up catalogues at Ticketmaster outlets, public libraries, select Barnes and Noble bookstores, or the High 5 executive offices (1 East 53rd St.); access it at www.high5tix.com or call HI5-TKTS to have one sent. Participating cultural institutions include Carnegie Hall, the Apollo Theater, and the Museum of Modern Art. (Students—from schools anywhere—need to present valid identification.)

Merry Men—Robin Hood steals from the rich, rescues Maid Marian, and engages in swashbuckling sword fights. The American Family Theater musical production set in the depths of Sherwood Forest is performed March 1 at 2. **COLDEN AUDITORIUM,** Queens College campus, between Exits 23 and 24 of the eastbound service road of the L.I.E. in Flushing (718-793-8080). Free parking is available; $8.●

Funny Business—Don Miller is the kind of guy who can make someone float in the air—or cause him to disappear. Kids and their parents are asked to assist in Miller's uncanny demonstration of magic and illusion. At **CAROLINES KIDS KLUB** (the official moniker for Carolines Comedy Club in its family-friendly mode), 2/28 and 3/1 at 2. (Families can eat lunch upstairs at Comedy Nation Restaurant, where waiters do comic riffs on the food orders, and balloon artists and magicians circulate among the tables.) 1626 Broadway, bet. 49th and 50th Sts. (757-4100). Tickets $10. Reservations required. ●

Natural Order— The Forces of Nature Dance Theater mixes jazz and modern dance in a program choreographed by Abdel R. Salaam. Three different works: *Uncle Remus Revisited, Eye of the Serpent,* and *Ode to Brahma,* evoke the myths and history of the African diaspora at the **NEW VICTORY THEATER.** 2/27 through 3/1. 209 W. 42nd St. (239-6200); $10–$25.●

Rabbit Redux—**THEATREWORKS** presents a musical version of Margery Williams's well-loved classic *The Velveteen Rabbit.* Through 3/1. The Promenade Theatre, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (627-7373). Individual tickets are $18.50; a flexible ten-ticket subscription is $145.●

In the Bag—For 40 years now, **THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS** have brought childlike qualities—most notably their trademark boxes-into-spaceships inventiveness—to joyous, freewheeling productions for children. Weekends at 2 through March 8. Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, 68th St. bet. Park and Lexington Aves. (772-4448). Tickets are $15 and $20.

Out There—Journey with hero PTIII past greaser aliens and an airborne moon maiden in an original musical space odyssey called *Starblast,* written by two Broadway veterans. 2/28 at 1:30 at the **TRIBECA PERFORMING ARTS CENTER,** 199 Chambers St. (346-8500). Tickets are $13, $8 for children. ●

Dahl Delicacy—A celluloid version of Roald Dahl's *The Witches*—starring Angelica Houston as the Grand High Witch—is based on a terrific yarn about a plot to turn all the children of England into mice. Screenings, part of an ongoing festival called *Dahl's Dementia,* are 2/28 and 3/1 at 2. **LINCOLN CENTER'**s Walter Reade Theater, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5610); $3. (Children 12 and under with an idea for a film series should enter the 1998 Kids Curator Contest by 3/31. Call the Theater for details.)●

Scout's Honors—Skating safety, **NY SKATEOUT'**s avowed goal, is not a controversial cause among parents. The organization takes kids (ages 7 to 14) on a weekly in-line spin around Central Park's lower loop, with full safety regalia required. Scouts on Skates—a kind of rolling youth enforcement force—meets afterward. Fifth Ave. at 72nd St., Saturdays at 3. For information on Saturday-afternoon SOS meetings and other NY Skateout activities, call 486-1919.●

Catty—Cat psychics will be there; so will cat astrologers and computer-driven electronic self-cleaning litter boxes. Forty feline breeds—some cute, some *National Enquirer*-freakish—compete for ribbons in the fourteenth International Cat Show. **MADISON SQUARE GARDEN,** Eighth Ave. and 33rd St. (for information, call 718-275-6098). 2/28 from 10 to 6, 3/1 from 10 to 5. On Saturday, tickets are $15.50, $10.50 for children and seniors; tickets on Sunday are $16.50, $12.50 for seniors and children.●

Service

Mother of Invention

"I see myself as a sort of matchmaker," explains Lisa Linn, owner of The Crowded Closet—a secondhand-exchange service for baby and toddler paraphernalia. Her four-month-old company hooks up a person looking for, say, a Graco Pack 'n' Play with a parent who's eager to get rid of one. Sellers pay a $10 fee to list as many items as they want in Linn's database; buyers call to search out the goodies. (Transportation and purchase price, though, are up to the individuals.) Business has been so brisk, Linn says—with Maclaren double strollers a top request—that "people are now asking me to include furniture, maternity clothes, and stuff for older kids, like Rollerblades." The 34-year-old computer consultant runs the service out of an 800-square-foot Upper West Side apartment she shares with her husband and three young children. "I was holding on to all this equipment and outgrown infant clothes," she explains, "and none of my friends were getting around to having babies. One day I realized it was getting ridiculous." Her solution resolved not only her own storage problems but a lot of other people's as well. Quite a few buyers are grandparents, Linn notes, happy to pick up an affordable high chair for visiting grandkids; other customers are single moms desperate for a bargain. While savings on big-ticket items can be significant, Linn admits she was surprised by the lengths to which some middle-class clients will go to save a few dollars. "People think nothing of driving in from Queens to check out a crib they could get brand-new—and nearly as cheaply—at their local Toys 'R' Us," she marvels. But that would be paying retail. (800-804-6675; 10 percent of proceeds go to the For All Kids Foundation.)

BARBARA ENSOR

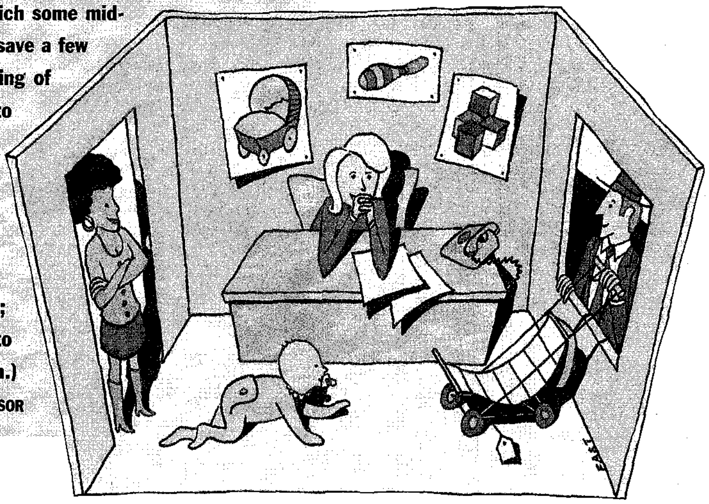


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Illustration by Ingo Fast.

in concert

Sarah Chang Performs With the Philharmonic

Classical Music

Tuesday, February 24

Dmitri Hvorotovsky, Baritone—Performs with Mikhail Arkadiev, piano. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 7:30; $17–$65.*

Wednesday, February 25

Tokyo String Quartet—Performs Mozart, Webern, and Tchaikovsky. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $32.*

Four Nations—Performs works by Bach, Beethoven, F. Couperin, and Schubert. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 8; $20.*

Sibelius Academy Symphony Orchestra—Performs Beethoven, Sibelius, and Stravinsky; Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 8; $15–$30.*

Thursday, February 26

New York Philharmonic—Performs Sibelius and Tchaikovsky, with Sarah Chang, violin; Kurt Masur, conductor. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $20–$75.*

Max Levinson, Piano—Performs Schubert and Chopin. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $12.*

Peregrine Trio—Performs works by Louise Beach, Ravel, and Seymour Barab. *Harold M. Proshansky Auditorium, 33 W. 42nd St., at 7; free.*

Le Quatuor—Performs a program of musical spoofs entitled *It's Raining Strings and Bows. Florence Gould Hall, 55 W. 59th St. (307-7171), at 8; $30.*

Bargemusic—Quartet performances of Bach and Schnyder. *Fulton Ferry Landing, under the Brooklyn Bridge, Brooklyn (718-624-4061), at 7:30; $20–$30.*

Friday, February 27

Berlin Symphony—Performs works by Beethoven, with Derek Han, piano; Joseph Silverstein, conductor. *Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, 695 Park Ave., at 68th St. (772-4448), at 8; $24.*

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra—Performs Mozart; Riccardo Muti, conductor. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 8; $30-$135.*

Petersen Quartet—Performs Haydn, Schulhoff, and Beethoven. *Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 8; $30.*

Beaux Arts Trio—Performs Haydn, Schumann, and Shostakovich. *Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (570-3949), at 8; $30.*

New York Philharmonic—See 2/26, at 2.

Le Quatuor—See 2/26.

Saturday, February 28

The Indestructible Bach—Works by the composer performed by Vladimir, Feltsman and Yuri Kim, pianos. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100), at 3; $35.*

Amy Ziegelbaum, Flute—Performs with Laura Leon-Cohen, piano. *Forest Hills Public Library, 108-19 71st St., Queens, at 2; free.*

Beaux Arts Trio—See 2/27.

Le Quatuor—See 2/26.

New York Philharmonic—See 2/26.

Sunday, March 1

Juliane Banse, Soprano—Performs songs by Schubert, Brahms, and Mendelssohn. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 5; $25–$35.*

Keller String Quartet—Performs Bach and Schubert. *Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 11; $15.*

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Performs works by Ravel. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 1 and 3; $12.*

Bargemusic—See 2/26, at 4.

Monday, March 2

Borromeo String Quartet—Performs Beethoven's String Quartet in E Minor. *Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 7:30; $20.*

Manuel Barrueco, Guitar—Performs music by De Visée, Bach, Sor, Ardévol, Brouwer, Gnattali, and Piazzolla. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100), at 3; $25.*

Previews
Spanish Steps

It's passion and pirouettes at City Center this week, where the National Ballet of Spain performs a mix of ballet, flamenco, and escuela bolera (a classical Spanish dance of the eighteenth century). Works by Felipe Sánchez, José Nieto, and the troupe's new artistic director, Aida Gómez, are on the bill through February 25; premieres from José Antonio, Antonio Canales, and José Granero will be presented February 27 through March 1.

Photograph by Paco Ruiz.

Opera

Metropolitan Opera—Performs Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, 2/24 and 3/1 at 8; Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*, 2/25 at 8, and 2/28 at 1:30; Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffman*, 2/28 at 8; Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, 2/26 at 8. *Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center (362-6000); $24–$200.*

Dicapo Opera—Performs Wargo's *A Chekhov Trilogy*, 2/27–28 at 8, and 3/1 at 3. *184 E. 76th St. (288-9438); $25.*

Dance

National Ballet of Spain—Performs 2/23–2/25 and 2/27–2/28 at 8, 2/28 at 2, and 3/1 at 3. *City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212); $35–$60.*

New York City Ballet—The company performs on 2/25–2/28 at 8, and 2/28 at 2. *State Theater, Lincoln Center (870-5570); $15–$68.*

Kibbutz Contemporary Dance—Performs *Aide Memoire*, 2/24–3/1. *Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. (242-0800), at 7:30; $32.*

Interpretations—Works by Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance, 2/18 at 7. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 8; free.*

Forever Tango—The Argentine form, interpreted by Luis Bravo. *Walter Kerr Theater, 218 W. 48th St. (239-6200); $30–$65.*

Margaret Beals—Performs new works by Lee Nagrin, 2/26–2/28 at 8. *Joyce Soho Theater, 155 Mercer St. (334-7479); $15.*

Katrina Van Zee and Erica Dankmeyer—Perform new choreography, 2/27 and 2/28 at 8 and 3/1 at 3. *Clark Studio Theater, Lincoln Center (924-0077); $12.*

Crossing Boundaries—Choreography by Severn Clay, Amos Pinhasi, Francisco Rider, and Henrique Schuller, 2/24 at 8. *Dixon Place, 258 Bowery (219-3088); $10.*

New Stuff Festival—Works by Dura Mater, Toshiko Oiwa, Michael Portnoy, and Andrea Smith, 2/26 and 2/28 at 8:30. *P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. (477-5288); $15.*

Ground Rules:

This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, **and public square/park performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, outdoors or in a public space. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."**

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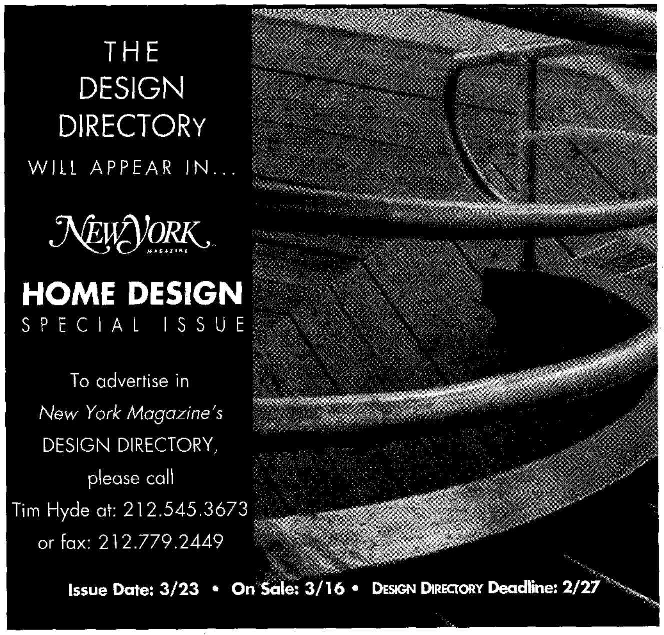
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Continued from previous page.

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Sophisticated Gentleman—Upper East Side, late 60s, tall, slim, attractive, active corporate executive seeks active, tall, slender, athletic soulmate for very exciting, good life. Current photo a must. 1992 ✉

Dynamite Dish, Thirtyish!—Jewish woman - curvaceous, fit, beautiful, bright, gentle. Looking for terrific, Jewish, single male to play with (golf, tennis and all fun indoor sports). Picture/letter. 2038 ✉

Make A New Friend—Or maybe more?? I don't know about you, but I keep seeing the same people at every party. This seems like a great way to expand your social circle. I'm a genuinely nice guy who is 41, tall, witty, wealthy and extremely wise. I'm good-looking, easy to talk to, high-energy, adventurous and capable of commitment. I travel a lot, don't work much anymore, love fine food, collect great wines (and drink them!) and love the great outdoors. I prefer small intimate gatherings to scenes and value my family and friends above all. I'd really like to meet a great girl with traditional values who'll be my best friend and lover. And if I make some new friends along the way, that's great too. So send me a note with your photo/phone and let's meet. What have you got to lose?? 2021 ✉

Lively And Smart—Pretty, slim, petite, youthful-looking, articulate, warm, cultured, thoughtful, funny, down-to-earth, romantic, athletic, interested professional woman, 38. Enjoys good conversation, books, music, cooking, NYC, the outdoors. Eager to meet accomplished, intelligent, attractive, solid, caring, high-energy man with strong interests and values, who seeks a partner for love and life. Note/photo/phone. 2028 ✉ ☎

Riding, Sailing, Skiing—Are three of our passions. Others include foreign travel, the arts, intelligent conversation and true love. This handsome, wealthy, fun man, 40, 5'10", blue eyes, big smile, seeks a wonderful, caring, sensual woman, 27-37, to share family, fidelity and all that life has to offer. Phone/photo. 2024 ✉

Dark-Eyed, Exotic, Sensual Brunette—5'3", slim, financially independent, high-energy woman of Italian heritage, who loves the outdoors (walking, tennis, hiking, traveling) and indoors (theater, dancing, cooking, reading), seeks professional male, 50-65, who is interested in meeting someone who has the opportunity to enjoy whatever life has to offer. 2018✉☎

Romance! The Final Frontier—These are the voyages of the Dating Enterprise. Its five-month mission: to explore an amazing, highly successful Jewish man (29-37), in order to seek out a special new love and relationship, to boldly go where no woman has gone before. This ship's captain is beautiful, petite, stimulating, adventurous and Jewish, 29. On this romantic voyage, openings are available for ship's doctor, counselor or anyone willing to share joyous and prosperous voyage through life. Note/photo/phone. 2004 ✉

Passion For Life, Laughter—A creative, accomplished surgeon with much warmth ...a caring, good-looking, old-fashioned romantic, multifaceted man, 5'10", slim, 43, with joy for fitness/arts, seeks sincere, caring woman under 38, with an angel's heart, for joy, love, marriage and so much more. Phone/photo necessary. 2073 ✉☎

40ish, Tall Guy—Would like to meet 30ish, attractive gal who enjoys the city, country, dancing, movies and traveling. Photo. 2076 ✉

Not What You Might Expect—Single Jewish man, 39, seeks friend, muse and anima. I work in banking technology (but would rather discuss Nabokov), live conventionally (but am drawn by the offbeat, arcane and obscure), and tend to overuse parentheses (but I'm trying to stop!). Would love to meet a spirited, intellectual woman, perhaps (just perhaps) with a bit (just a bit) of an edge. Hipness unimportant (though hippiness always catches my eye). 2046 ✉ ☎

Single White Female—48, 5'6", redhead, very attractive and fashionable, would like to meet financially secure, professional, single white male, 45-59, who is attractive, mature, open-minded, understanding, and enjoys dining, dancing, conversation and working toward a meaningful, nurturing relationship. Photo/note. 2055 ✉

Attractive, Intelligent Male—32, 5'10", sandy hair, Catholic background and Ivy-educated - is seeking an unattached, bright, fit female, 24-30, interested in a long-term relationship. 1983 ✉ ☎

Financially Secure, Low-Key, Educated—Man, middle-aged, Jewish, seeks younger, intelligent NJ lady into fitness, workouts or martial arts. Tall a plus. 2072 ✉ ☎

Very Handsome—Single white male, 42, looks 32 (really), company president, nonsmoker, in great shape, nearly vegetarian, avid reader, communicative, with great sense of humor and zest for life... Seeking very intelligent, attractive, health-conscious, sexy, slim, petite a plus, single white female to 35, emotionally and financially secure, for a meaningful relationship. Photo, please. 2031 ✉

Looking For Someone—To hang out with...forever. Jewish female who loves laughter, music and long runs in the park, seeks professional male, 29-39, with a warm heart and a baseball cap. Send note with photo, please. 2042 ✉

Dear Partner/Husband To Be—Here are the requirements for winning my heart: you should be optimistic and enjoy an active life, your family and hobbies. You will like it that I am passionate about you and involved in my work. You are healthy, zestful and between 55-70. If you are trim and fit, you can skip handsome - but you need to be educated and cultured. Being European-born, I love to travel...and I also like to cook and entertain at home. I enjoy the performing arts, and my hobbies include tennis, dancing and gardening. I am blue-eyed, blond, 5'3", slim and very fit, 62, divorced mother of two, a successful PhD - pretty, affectionate, giving and fun to be with. Do I have your attention? Let's give love a chance. 2036 ✉

Northwest Jersey Business Owner—47, 5'7", Italian-born, educated, good-looking, fun-loving, financially secure, ready to settle down with the right woman. I enjoy travel, fine restaurants, movies, canoeing... Seeking caring, attractive, active, family-oriented, independent yet traditional woman, 30-40, ready for a future filled with love, laughter and children. Note/photo. 2047 ✉

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Pretty, Petite Female—35 (appears 27), dark hair/eyes, Italian-American, warm, caring, friendly and fun, residing in Brooklyn. Seeks male, 34-43, with a big heart, for sincere, loving relationship. Marriage-minded only. Brief letter with photo and phone number. 2066 ✉

Attractive Filipina—36, 5'5", college degree, fair, slim, active, many interests. Seeks marriage-minded, serious, single white professional - Christian, American. 2030 ✉

Very Attractive, Elegant, Slender—39, 5'7" brunette seeks man, 37-46, who, like me, is Jewish, fit, warm, smart, well-educated and successful. Nonsmoker. Letter and recent photo, please. 1982 ✉

Very Cute, Sexy MD—32, 5'9", fit Jewish male - seeks smart, pretty, thin, petite lady for romance. Photo. 2054✉☎

Not Knowing What To Say—I consulted a former beau who asked me to quote him as follows: "She looks like Andie MacDowell, except slimmer and sexier. At 53, she has a kind of beauty that will keep until 83, a way with words that rivals Churchill's, and an animal growl that sounds like Mae West's... A classy woman who inspires admiration and awe." Of course, he doesn't know what he's talking about. But try me anyway. 2082 ✉ ☎

Pearl In The Oyster—29, beautiful, intriguing, intelligent Manhattanite, seeking a handsome, athletic, funny man with an appreciation for gems. Note/photo. 2035 ✉

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Good-Looking Greek Male—34, 6', 170 lbs, down-to-earth, kind, caring, seeking that one woman to spend rest of life with. Note/photo/phone. 2025 ✉ ☎

Who Says Nice Guys Finish Last?—Good-looking NJ esquire, 37, seeks buxom Jewish gal, 30-34, who enjoys arts, ethnic food...for fun, romance. 2088 ✉

Tall, Slender, Sexy—Vital, verbal, active and attractive female seeks white male, 60-65. 2064 ✉

NYC Girl-Next-Door—PhD English, cute, witty, cultured, seeks man of substance, 50-59, smart, fun, successful, for marriage. Photo/note. 1963 ✉

Classical Natural Beauty—Lustrous auburn hair, petite size 6, dangerous curves, gorgeous legs, marathoner, cook, multilingual, MFA, designer, artist. Seeking 40ish, healthy spirit, wealthy/successful, sensitive and wise gentleman with old-fashioned values and still believes in fairy-tale endings, for marriage - not interested in starting a family. 2060 ✉

Professional Muslim Male—30, 5'9", health-conscious, down-to-earth, sincere, caring and honest. Seeking professional or professionally-oriented, religious, intelligent and attractive Muslim female, 22-28, to be my best friend, soul mate and partner in life. Note/photo mandatory. 2045 ✉

Nice Guy, Late 60s, Still Youthful—Educated, solvent, healthy, enjoys travel and the arts, would like to share them with an intelligent, warmhearted, petite woman, over 55. Jewish a plus. 2022 ✉

Successful, Kind MD—From the Jersey Shore, Jewish (nonreligious), 42. Enjoys sports, dining, dancing and music. Seeks attractive, intelligent, charming woman for happily ever after. Nonsmoker only. Note/photo and phone appreciated. 2000 ✉

Black Female MD—37, 5'3", slender, attractive, sensual, spiritual, well-traveled. Passions: the arts. Seeks educated male, age 35-45, with integrity, sense of humor, joie de vivre. Race unimportant; quality of character critical. 2044 ✉

Warm, Witty—Accomplished man, handsomely 51, seeks cultured, sweet attractive lady, 35-45, possibly European. 2070 ✉ ☎

Pleasure Of Your Company—Bright, beautiful, classy lady seeks Jewish gentleman, 70, (212). The best is yet to be. Note/photo/phone. 2087 ✉

Nice, Educated Single Female—European background, financially independent, mid 30s, seeks professional man, mid 30s to mid 40s, interested in marriage and children. POB 250.577, Columbia University Station, NY, NY 10025.

Challenge Me—Female, 43, own my own business, love sports - skiing, running, softball and Knicks. Seeking similar-interests 38-50-year-old. Extra points for being in sports or the entertainment industry. Note/photo. 1999 ✉ ☎

Share My Sunday Times...—And other times. I'm a very attractive, thin, intelligent, honest, compassionate, financially secure woman with a subtle sense of humor and varied interests. If you're a man with similar qualities, in your mid 50s-60s, a nonsmoker, in reasonably good shape, who asks for directions when he's lost, I'd like to meet you. Recent photo please, with note/phone. 2084 ✉ ☎

Good-Looking, Dynamic Male—Successful entrepreneur, athletic, witty, romantic, sincere, seeks smart, sensual, fit, beautiful (inside/out) female, 30-46 or so, to 5'6", for best friend and lover. Note/phone/recent full-length photo. 2081 ✉ ☎

West Side Values, Downtown Style—...East Side upbringing. Late 30s, Jewish beauty, Ivy-educated, with expansive mind, fit body and exceptional career in film/television, seeks politically progressive, literate, brilliant and mature mate (40s) for Caribbean camping, Cajun dancing, dog walking, car repair. You are a sophisticated, accomplished nonconformist of sorts... You wouldn't expect to find me here. Letter/photo. 2063 ✉

Gay Woman, Published Author—PhD, good sense of humor, creative. Seeks counterpart, 50s plus, for sharing life's pleasures. 1986 ✉

I'm Wondering...—About a certain man. I haven't met you in my undergraduate fine arts persual, pre-medical or medical studies, nor in my psychiatric training. Oddly, you haven't surfaced on any of my morning runs over the years. If you've been in my low-key, friendly neighborhood - at the coffee bar or the farmer's market - we must have missed each other. I'm loathe to throw in movies, concerts, museums or bookstores ...but you haven't been there either. I'm 37 - my friends say I'm attractive, fit and funny - and I think I've been very patient. I know good things come to those who wait, so if you are funny and you believe in the unconscious at least a little, and you would like to be found, contact me. Note/photo. 2074 ✉

Outstanding Gentleman—Seeks outstanding lady. Happy, divorced, tall, handsome Jewish financier - two great kids, 40, (212), with heart, integrity and zest for life, seeks counterpart. Note/photo/phone, please. 2029 ✉

Sweet And Shiny—Brown-eyed girl seeks beau for love and happiness. Please be kind, 35-50, and have a zest for life. Please don't smoke. 2001 ✉

Greatest Male In NJ—37, seeks petite, very fit, white female. Note and recent photo a must. 2059 ✉

Real Woman—Attractive, successful Jewish widow, 55, seeks warm, intelligent male for lasting relationship. 2010 ✉ ☎

Nice Guy Seeks Special Woman—Young Jewish professional, 40, eclectic interests, values conversation and honesty. Seeks sensitive woman with a good heart, marriage-minded, under 40. 2086 ✉ ☎

The Perfect Find—Looking for same in a single white Christian male. I'm 42, female, never married, professional, and looking to have children and marriage. Please be of same mind and send a current picture with a letter to: 2058 ✉

Senior Gentleman—Tall, witty and wise, seeks charming uptown lady who enjoys movies, opera, dining, trips. Photo, please. 2037 ✉

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Pretty Woman—Tall, curvy, athletic professional, 46, seeks tall, intelligent, interesting man, 45-55. 1997 ✉ ☎

Sparkling Hazel Eyes—34, MD, 5'10", handsome, tan complexion, slim, charming and outgoing. Seeks single white female, 26-32 - very attractive, slim, intelligent, ambitious and active, for special relationship leading to marriage. Thoughtful note and photo appreciated. 1996 ✉

Gay White Male—60, 5'11", 160 lbs, Paul Newman type. You, the same: nonsmoking, financially secure, with quality time to share. My previous relationship 17 years. Photo, please. 2006 ✉

5'3", Eyes On Me—41, great-looking blue-eyed blond, smart, sexy, savvy mother of one, with great personality - seeks Jewish man, 42-47, rugged looks, down-to-earth, well-educated. Be financially successful, have a sense of family and great sense of humor. Note/photo. 2075 ✉ ☎

Sashimi Versus Chicken Soup—Eclectic, Waspy, all-American Jewish male, 6'1", 175, 34, blue eyes, brown hair, extremely athletic, all Ivy-educated, seeks pretty, smart, athletic, down-to-earth Jewish girl who would rather spend time in Vail than in Miami, prefers frosted flakes to granola, and would most willingly help me concoct a tale about how we met. Note/photo. 1925 ✉

Extremely Successful—European background, blue-eyed, handsome executive for worldwide operating company, seeking attractive, mid 20s-early 30s female for long-lasting, rewarding relationship, because I'm sure that you deserve the best. 1989 ✉

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Good-Looking And Successful—Professional seeks compatible woman, 27-34. I am 35, 5'11", dark brown hair, fit, Ivy-educated (MBA), outgoing, warm, fun, a good listener who seeks similar traits in an accomplished woman (likely lawyer/Wall Street type), to become special friends. Note/phone/photo a must. 2057 ✉ ☎

Cute Japanese—Ivy, seeks 6' MD, nice, single white male. 1995 ✉

Papagena Seeks Papageno—Opera buff, 38, comely, fun woman physician with subscription to NYC Opera. Come make music with me this spring. 2009 ✉ ☎

Send Me Your Resume And Photo—I am recruiting a very special candidate for life partner. Looking for a tall, fit, successful professional/businessman, 45-58. If qualified, the compensation is enormously rewarding. 2032 ✉

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Can You Handle Life In The Spotlight?—If so, then this chubby, 62-year-old Manhattan cigar lover could be for you. I'm looking for a slim lady, 25-45, for days in the sun and nights on the town. Phone and photo a must. 2065 ✉

Exquisite Pearl—Sensitive, vivacious, hip, passionate - loves intellectual stimulus, understated elegance, exotic foods and travel. Seeks civilized gentleman - JD, MBA, 35-50, loves sushi and dogs, is witty, sympathetic, capable of cross-cultural commitment. Photo. 2083 ✉

Seek Caring Woman—For our future child. 39, 6'1", male seeks intelligent, stable woman for committed, lifelong platonic relationship leading to marriage and family. 2007 ✉ ☎

I Have A Lust For Life!—Passionate, romantic woman with a sense of humor. I travel, cook, attend the theater, opera, concerts, enjoy sports and love adventurous, spontaneous men who like to laugh. Financially independent, attractive 45-year-old professional longing for someone to share the moments. I can't wait. 2067 ✉ ☎

Smart, Fun(ny), Offbeat, Sensuous—LI, Jewish therapist/writer, buxom/unslim 50s, seeks great guy, 48-62. 2068 ✉ ☎

Very Lonely—Because I'm missing you to share my unlimited potential. This very handsome, athletic, very wealthy executive seeks slim, pretty female, mid 20s-early 30s, for any relationship that fits your personality, because I'm ready for any challenge to find love, happiness, friendship or anything else that is going to cure the pain of loneliness. 1990 ✉

Indian Woman—Sought by sophisticated gentleman - single white male, slender, 30s. Let's match wits, dreams, passions... for last(ing) relationship. 2089 ✉

Exceptional Oriental Woman—Stunning former beauty queen, tall, slim, mid 30s, enchanting, elegant pearl, never married, cultured, sophisticated, classy entrepreneur. Seeks very handsome, 5'11" plus, extremely successful, humorous, compassionate man with integrity, late 30s-mid 40s, for life, love and oyster on the half shell. Photo essential. 2052 ✉

Ann Margret Look-Alike—30s, 5'7", enjoys laughing, skiing, traveling. Seeks athletic male, 35-45, 5'7" plus. 2002 ✉ ☎

Where Are You?—Sensual, attractive professional woman desires classy, generous, spiritual, financially secure man who enjoys music, love, wonders of life. Photo/telephone number appreciated. 2101 ✉

Stunning Female—Professional - outgoing, down-to-earth, seeks nonreligious Jewish male, MD/DDS, early 50s, for sharing and caring. 2053 ✉ ☎

Sensitive, Slim, Cute Male—5'5", Italian-American teacher, 35, quiet type, seeks warm, loving woman. 2034 ✉

Truly Handsome—43, teacher - lives spontaneously. You love sports and wish to seize every opportunity with this sincere, culturally interested, family-minded, well-seasoned traveler. Let's hit the slopes, the courts, the jazz clubs and learn to share and experience everything... together. Photo. 2078 ✉

Ebony Beauty—29, slim, very attractive black woman, educated, well-traveled, lives and works in CT - seeks mature, successful white male who has everything in life except me. Photo/phone. 2043 ✉ ☎

One In A Million—Looking for the other one. Cut-above woman seeks really sharp 50-60s guy. Bit of a cut-up a big plus. Note/photo, please. 2005 ✉

Head-Turning Cornellian (1973)—Slender, natural blond, 5'6", great legs, Jewish, divorced (no children), athletic and tennis lover - seeks financially secure, tall, fun-loving, upscale and cultured male, 45-55. 2080 ✉ ☎

NYC Guy Seeks NYC Gal—Tall, down-to-earth Manhattan male, 41, fun-loving, intelligent, very romantic, sincere, great sense of humor - enjoys music, sports, movies, dining out, traveling, reading, computers, and his chocolate Lab pup. Seeks an attractive, warm, intelligent, 28-40 female who's not afraid of falling in love, for a committed, lasting relationship that is filled with honesty, good times and romance. I'm sure you're out there... It's just that our paths have never crossed. Note/recent photo, please. 2027 ✉

Sharing And Caring—Vivacious, slim, divorced Jewish female, corporate administrator, early 50s - loves woods, beaches, NYC, movies, tennis and lazy Sundays... Seeking my other half. 2061 ✉ ☎

Brown-Eyed Girl—Attractive, voluptuous, funny Jewish woman, 32, seeks warm, tall, intelligent, fit professional man who loves to laugh as much as he loves music. Note/photo, please. 2008 ✉

Batman And ?—Michael Keaton look-alike. Single white male, 6'1", 180 lbs, brown hair, blue eyes, early 40s, Manhattan business professional. Looking for woman in her 30s who seeks romance and adventure. Lets's have fun at my vacation home in Colorado. I have a sense of humor, big heart and good values. Interested? Letter, phone number and photo. Thank you! 2100 ✉

Ready For Altar—34, 5'11", fit, Ivy MBA, Wall Street, seeks attractive, nonsmoking, fit, professional Catholic woman, 26-32, who enjoys travel, sports, romance. Note/photo, please. 2056 ✉

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Moonlight In Vermont—Good-looking, recently retired CEO, age 61, seeks very attractive, intelligent, accomplished woman, 40 plus, to share life with. I am athletic - love tennis, golf and international travel...with homes in Vermont and Florida. You are active, energetic, adventurous and warmhearted. Note, phone and photo, please. 2041 ✉

44, Asian, Petite—Sane and artistic, seeks compatible male, 40-55. 2023 ✉

While Kisses May Be A Better Fate—Than wisdom...this smart, sensual, fit, 40, 5'2", brown-eyed beauty seeks educated, emotionally evolved, darkly handsome, successful and cultured man to explore something real. Nonsmoker. 2040 ✉ ☎

Gay Man, 44—Enjoys conversation, travel, art, theater, career, great health and kind friends. I hope to find a partner who has sincere values - masculine, educated, handsome, and wants very much to share his life. Photo, please. 2071 ✉ ☎

40-Something Renaissance Woman—Very attractive, sensuous and cerebral female attorney with an enormous wit, esprit de corps, compassion and a slew of interests, seeks male counterpart, 45-60, 5'10" plus. Note/photo a must. 2039 ✉ ☎

Successful Entrepreneur—Wants to meet an educated, pretty and fit Jewish lady, 40-45 years old, nonsmoker, successful, with both feet on the ground, who is financially independent, emotionally secure and enjoys the finer things of life. I am of European background, financially and emotionally secure, handsome, 5'10", 50 years old, and have many diverse interests such as travel, skiing, fine art, etc. If you have similar interests, I look forward to hearing from you. Note/photo, please. 2026 ✉

Tall, Slender And Spirited—Dark-haired professional - great smile, 33, affectionate, inquisitive, down-to-earth, looking for a best friend: Jewish man, 29-45, to make a relationship full of laughter, fun and shared interests. Thoughtful note, please. 2050 ✉ ☎

Single On Sutton—Witty, pretty, warm, winning woman wishes for a Jewish gentleman of 60s vintage, who wishes for a very attractive, slender, companionable partner, interesting and interested, elegant in style and manner. Photo/note. 1998 ✉

Single Jewish Male—43, cute, sexy, kind, fun, romantic, seeks lovely, full-figured single white female for friendship and long-term relationship. 1994 ✉ ☎

Looking For A Friend—Tall, slim, very fit, attractive woman with kind and romantic heart, looking for a loving, committed relationship. In my 40s - but look 30s due to daily exercise, healthy diet and the luck of my genes. It would be nice to have a man in my life to enjoy the theater with, take long walks, go to a movie, eat in elegant restaurants or stay at home, cook dinner and watch a video. Please be late 30s-50s, good-natured, affectionate, intelligent, down-to-earth and comfortable with yourself. Note and photo appreciated. 1991 ✉ ☎

Class Act Seeks Leading Lady—Successful entrepreneur, 46, 6', muscular, dynamic, creative and humorous. I have a versatile range of interests including world travel, music, theater and sports. Seeking an intelligent, buxom brunette (30-45) of substance and style. Small children a plus. Note/photo. 1981 ✉

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Results of Competition 901, in which you were asked for teams: real places, invented names.

Report: How to begin. Thousands of entries, many laughs. Uncanny duplications. Please see end of results for a list. And know that it was difficult to relegate first-rate teams to this pile. Among them: The Taipei Personalities. The Helena Handbasket. The Perth Thnatchers. You are all appallingly silly. Thanks.

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Michael J. Hammer, Washington, D.C.

The Cork Shrews
John O'Byrne, Dublin, Ireland

The Baja Humbugs
Marcella Chodaczek, Greenwich, Conn.

The Pierre Pressure
Rita Hattal, Marina del Rey, Calif.
Joshua Prager, N.Y.C.

The Spokane Word
Abigail Shipley, Seattle, Wash.
similarly: Harold R. Schneider, Austin, Tex.

The Boise II Men
Carol Weiss Rosenberg, South Bend, Ind;
Jan Verrey, Alexandria, Va.;
Lynn Gilbert Callé, N.Y.C.;
Helen McDonough, Cambria Hts., N.Y.;
Dan Greenburg, Hastings, N.Y.

The Douai Decimals
Natalie Wittenbrook, San Francisco, Calif.

The Creighton Barrel
Lucy Oblonsky, Newark, Del.;
Joel Knanishu, Rock Island, Ill.

The Hyannis Sports
Rosemary Brzustoski, Huntington Station, N.Y.

The Darien Young Men
Bill Harriman, Niantic, Conn.

The Seattle Outercourts
Frances Hotkins, Mount Vernon, N.Y.

The Pompeii Doors
Jane Kretzmann, Vienna, Va.

The Plano Vanillas
Lee Salzberg, Trumbull, Conn.;
similarly: Ryan Edwards, Denton, Tex.

The Amarillo Teapot
Mary Jane Gore, Charlottesville, Va.;
Karen Rubin, Astoria, N.Y.

The Leeds Common Denominators
Dot Edwards, Galena, Mo.

The Mali Coddlers
Adam Doyle, Blacksburg, Va.
similarly: F. Coyne, Narbeth, Pa.

The Dubai Fours
Elisa Falciglia, Reston, Va.

The Algiers Hiss
R. Gorby, Bowie, Md.

The Tehran Dotted Line
Ezra Perlman, Philadelphia, Pa.

The Marietta Little Lambs
Dave Mochel, Clinton Corners, N.Y.

The Cheyenne Silent Types
W. R. Manny, Washington, N.Y.;
similarly: Joel Jacobs, Wantagh, N.Y.

The Mecca Lomaniacs
Mitchell A. Kopnick, Geneva, Ill.;
T. Hoth, Tucson, Ariz.

The Chapel Hill Punishment
Ed Eriksson, Port Jefferson, N.Y.

The Carmel Chameleons
Tristram Perry, East Somerville, Mass.

The Paducah Windsor
Betty Ann Kahn, Las Vegas, Nev.

The Ithaca Seemenows
Sylvan Solloway, N.Y.C.

The Paraguay Trousers
Todd Feitelson, Millbrook, N.Y.

The Blackshear Dresses
C. Trivier, Blackshear, Ga.

The Abadan Costellos
C. Olds, Freeport, Me.

The Bakersfield Irregulars
Raymond E. Benenson, Niskayuna, N.Y.

The Kigali Missmollies
Andy Galker, Malibu, Calif.

The Dacca Kildares
Renee Yonke, Rutherford, N.J.

The Sacramento Wine
similarly: Jeffrey Swann, N.Y.C.
Cynthia Kirk, West Cornwall, Conn.

The Tunis Andwiches
Dr. David W. Hughes, London, England;
Emily Weigand, Howell, N.J.

The Exeter Stagewrights
Dave Luzon, North Attleboro, Mass.

The Bahrain Trust
Douglas Feinstein, Chicago, Ill.

The Butte Titians
Edward Wladas, Princeton, N.J.

The Shrewsbury Husbands
David I. Warren, Chagrin Falls, Ohio

The Catskill Mice
David Levine, Brooklyn, N.Y.

The Solvay (N.Y.) Reginas
Paul J. Kocak, Syracuse, N.Y.

The Aberdeen Thehand
Sam Glantzow, Tulare S.D.

The Cologne Oscopese
Jeff Stein, Brooklyn

The Closter Phobias
Gary Alweiss, Closter, N.J.;
Elizabeth Abramson, N.Y.C.;
Albert Komishane, Elizabeth N.J.
Barry Bellinger, Washington, D.C.

The Bali Whoppers
Len Flom, M.D., Westport, Conn.

The Bordeaux Directors
Nikki Aldeborgh, Sharon, Mass.

The Minsk Juleps
Jeff Brawer, Brookline, Mass.

The Waco Little Suzies
Richard Katz, N.Y.C.

The Tacoma Six-Pack
Maggie Mulhearn, Monticello, N.Y.

The Cuba Zirconia
Jen Mui, Bronx

The Nice Ox
Ray Weigand, Howell, N.J.

The Ghana Strays
Amy Baroch, N.Y.C.

The Aruba Dercis
Robert A. Farber, Allentown, Pa.

Your Ankara Bankers
Bruce Karp, Hackensack, N.J.

Repeated: Prague Noses. Paris Sights. London Derrieres. Hanover Fist. Rome Antic. Haifa Lootings. Bonn Vivants. New York Minutes. Provo Loners. Macon Whoopie. Tijuana Dance. Seoul Survivors. Richmond Poormen. Seville Strife. Havana Gilas. Delhi Contessas. Augusta Wind. Nome Skulls. Dublin Tendres. Accra Bats. Marseilles A's. Dayton Game. Canaan Ables.

Rules: Postcards, please, typed if possible. **ONE ENTRY ONLY** to Competition Number 904, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022-6999. E-mail to 104700.2563@compuserve.com, **WITH STREET ADDRESS.** Entries must be received by March 6. Editor's decisions are final, and all entries become property of *New York.* Results and winners' names will appear in the March 30 issue.

Solutions to last week's puzzles

		H	O	P	E	A	N	D	G	L	O	R	Y	
C		A		L		M		R		I		O		
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O		L		S		E		W		I		S		E
S	P	A	T	T	E	R		L	E	S	B	I	A	N
S		G		E		G				O		N		O
S	M	E	A	R		R	E	C	O	N	F	I	R	M
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C	A	P	A	R	I	S	O	N		A	R	S	O	N
T		A		E				S		C		L		A
I	G	N	O	B	L	E		T	U	R	N	O	U	T
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		R		L		I		I		I		I		N
	P	A	N	T	E	C	H	N	I	C	O	N		

S	A	N	D	A	L	S		S	I	T	I	N			B	R	A	S	S	
E	P	A	U	L	E	T		A	T	O	N	E	R		L	A	N	C	E	R
W	E	R	E	L	I	O	N	W	H	E	N	W	E	D	I	N	G	O	T	O
	D	A	L	E		R	O	S	A				T	A	P		E	T	T	A
				G	O	A	T		C	A	V	I	A	R			L	I	E	N
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S	U	C	H	A	B	E	A	R	F	A	C	E	D	C	H	E	E	T	A	H
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L	A	D	D	I	E		T	I	P		S	R	S		O	T	E	L	L	O
				D	A	B		T	O	N		O	P	A	L		A	T	O	P
	O	F	Y	O	U	R	S	H	E	E	P	W	I	S	E	C	R	O	C	S
A	C	R	E			O	N	E	T	O	A		G	A	O	L				
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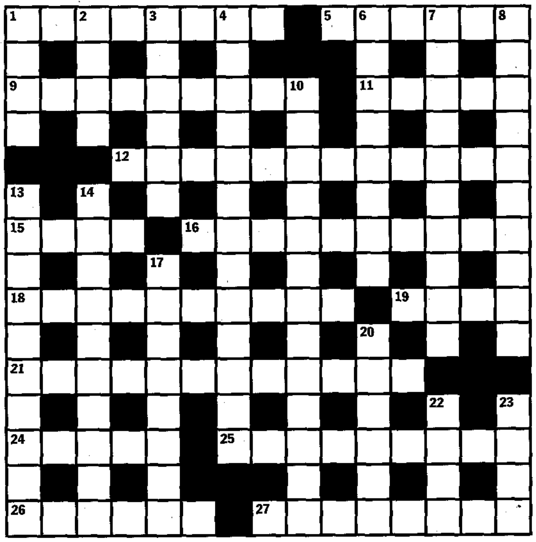
The 'Guardian' Crossword

ACROSS

1 Breathing apparatus for (23?) section instrument? (8)
5 Was Mowgli in the second XI at Old Trafford? (3-3)
9 Naked courage that burns on the way down? (3,6)
11 Head librarian has to fill gap on stage. (2-3)
12 Unordained academic among supporters at a Geordie day out. (7,5)
15 Bear-back on the croquet lawn. (4)
16 Stephenson's crazy proposal. (10)
18 Carmen's place at the Golden Gate, perhaps. (10)
19 Pole half supported by the church. (4)
21 Versatile as speaker, rendering bathroom wall posh first in Scots island. (12)
24 How to move a caravan, that is to say (2,3)
25 French port supplied to animals. (5,4)
26 Annoyed at being spied on? (6)
27 Upset by a reactionary taunt about that modernist gallery? (8)



DOWN

1 See 13.
2 Amphibious republican. (4)
3 Tumble along to give some of the populace some pleasure. (6)
4 Wrongly play it—cost, R.I.P.? (5,8)
6 Agricultural measure found in nameless Greek poet. (8)
7 Tough tool: cheat the winter weather first. (4,6)
8,23 Be involved with 17 and crazy young creatures lost on stage. (5,2,3,4)
10 Comprehensive even if on uneven ground? (8-5)
13, 1 DOWN Geordie monster, young creature no. 2 turning into a measure of heat. (3,7,4)
14 Bluebottle's run in Monopoly. (10)
17 People who sail in the 1 down 23 may get drunk. (8)
20 Expression of contempt for lace-work on Ilkley Moor. (4,2)
22 Unable to move quickly. (4)
23, 1 DOWN Beetle likely to break down? (8)

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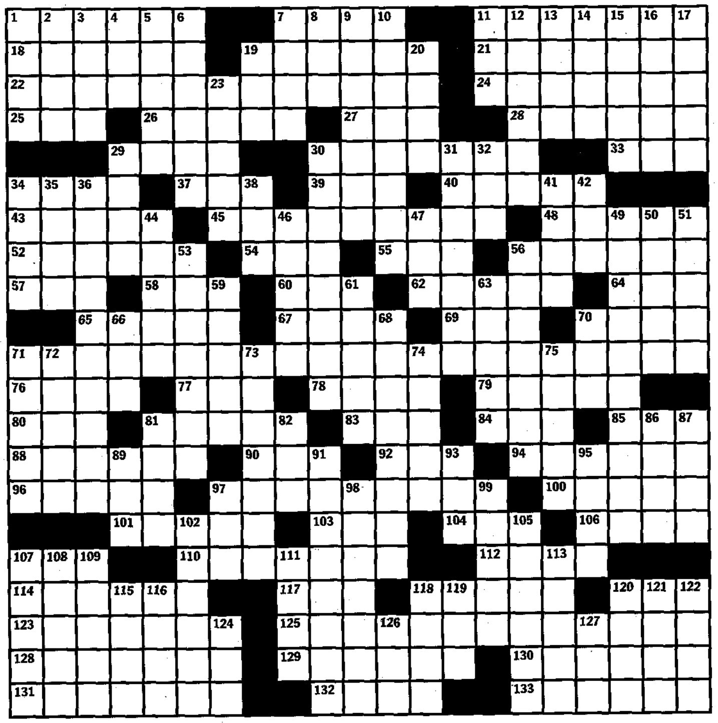
'Horrors!': 'Cue' Crossword • By Maura B. Jacobson

ACROSS

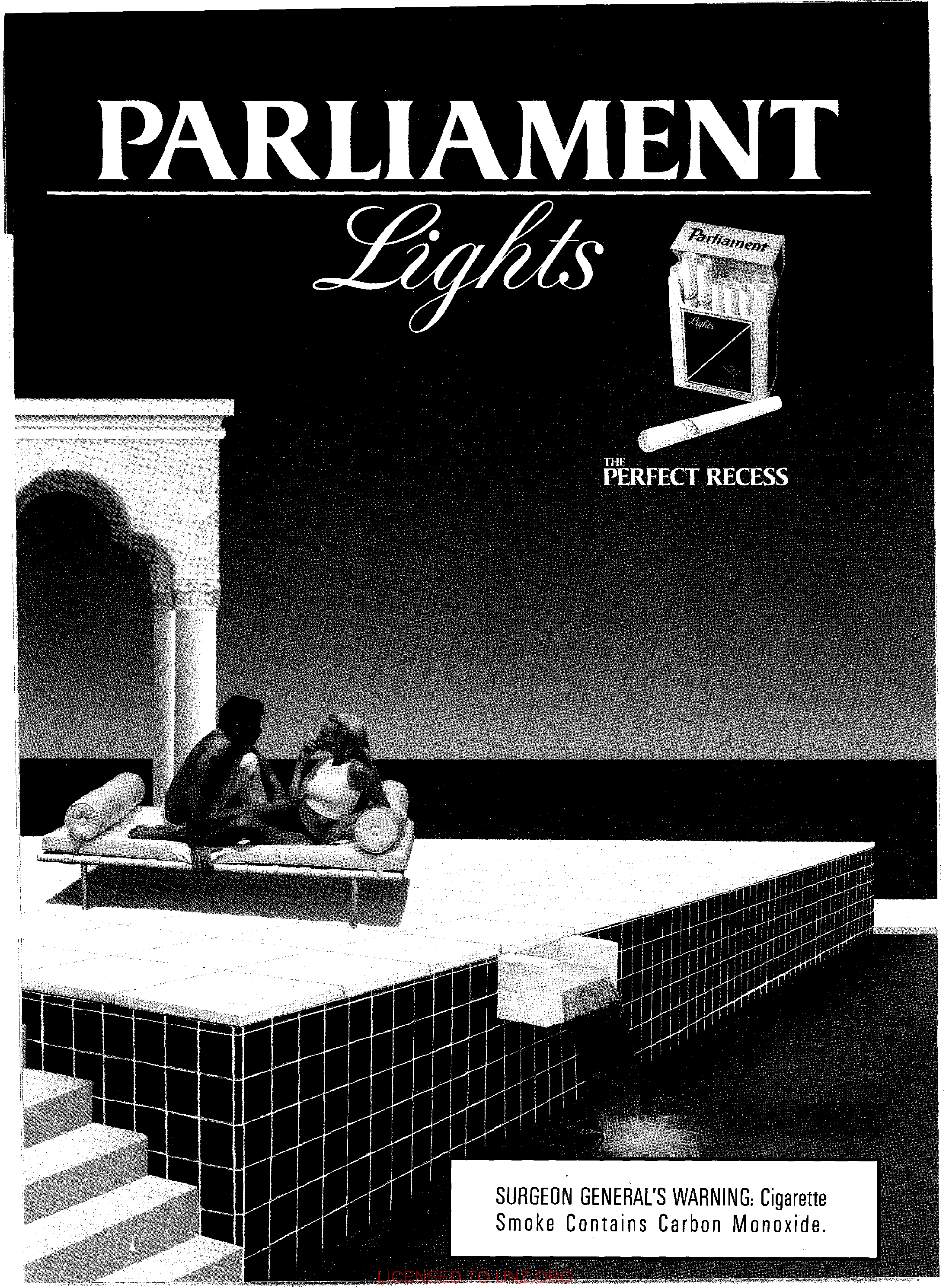
1 Pixielike
7 Swiss peak, French-style
11 The North Star
18 Perforate
19 Veer sharply
21 Texas city
22 Creepy 1945 film
24 Lon Chaney Jr. classic, with "The"
25 "Silent" Pres.
26 Oklahoma Indians
27 Phone-button 6
28 "—— Necessarily So"
29 Staircase unit
30 Tell to go
33 Crumpets' go-with
34 Marshal Dillon
37 Turn down the brights
39 Guinness-book suffix
40 Allow to be known
43 Actor Milo
45 Chiller of 1942 and 1982
48 "Not on your life!"
52 Ladybug, e.g.
54 Tanker cargo
55 Feminists' org.
56 Colleague of Karloff
57 N. Eur. airline
58 Varnish ingredient
60 Bandsman Brown
62 Runs out of steam
64 Put into service
65 "Do I —— Waltz?"
67 Rebuke to Brutus
69 Mauna ——
70 Flea-market conditional
71 Hit horror film of 1984
76 Hunger symptom
77 "You there!"
78 Ranch vacationer
79 Kind of finish
80 "—— was saying . . ."
81 How to sing with Mitch
83 Three times, in prescriptions
84 Collection
85 Lawyer's retainer
88 "The Cat and the ——," scary silent film
90 Ice T specialty
92 "Spare" bone
94 Saint Lawrence River feature
96 Famed Parthenon marbles
97 Horror film with four sequels
100 Nat Turner, for one
101 Part of H.R.E.
103 Age
104 Make a higher bid
106 Timberland tools
107 —— Cob, Connecticut
110 Billie Jean King's nickname
112 Parser's word
114 Mountain nymphs
117 After verb or malt
118 Harbingers
120 Feathery scarf
123 1972 vampire film
125 British horror film, 1962
128 Worked in shifts
129 Express in a Christie movie
130 Convalesced
131 Pen names
132 Partner of odds
133 By word of mouth

DOWN

1 Saga
2 Mona of the Louvre
3 Tumbled
4 High dudgeon
5 Skedaddle
6 Lifted to determine the weight of
7 Wows
8 Guided
9 Basic proposition
10 Suburb of Chicago
11 Fido's foot
12 Certain woodwind player
13 Lively rhythm
14 With Romeo, an Italian car
15 Send payment
16 Nonsensical
17 "The Flying Dutchman" heroine
19 "The —— Creature," monster film
20 Esau's land
23 Subject
29 No dele
30 Drained of resources
31 Malice
32 Get the point
34 Gangland groups
35 On the briny
36 Stephen King thriller
38 Chiang's foe
41 Burden
42 Yule drink
44 Mohammed's Almighty
46 Shower-wall installer
47 Stove sight
49 3-D horror film
50 One of the Davises
51 Oscar-winner Dianne
53 Of this world
56 Dogwalkers' needs
59 Sculpted gem
61 Portly
63 Frisks about
66 Future chicken
68 In progress
70 Guggenheim display
71 At a good clip
72 Twangy
73 "The Fountainhead" author
74 Like horror films
75 Carries
81 Pisa's river
82 Sal of song
86 Roof overhang
87 "The —— of Laura Mars," 1978 shocker
89 Ventilate
91 Enjoyment
93 Ante up
95 A Bates
97 Roach or Prince
98 Judge's "—— the court!"
99 Combo of nine
102 Believer in 44-Down
105 Kin of a serape
107 Snake-charmer's pet
108 Acrylic fiber
109 Former Pac. alliance
111 Akins's sheriff role
113 Poe's fallen house
115 Open —— of worms
116 Moral obligation
118 Has possession of
119 Coll. near Harvard
120 Bear's opposite on Wall Street
121 City between Kiev and Moscow
122 "Showboat" captain
124 Commercials
126 Composer Rorem
127 Ewe said it



Solutions to last week's puzzles appear on page 107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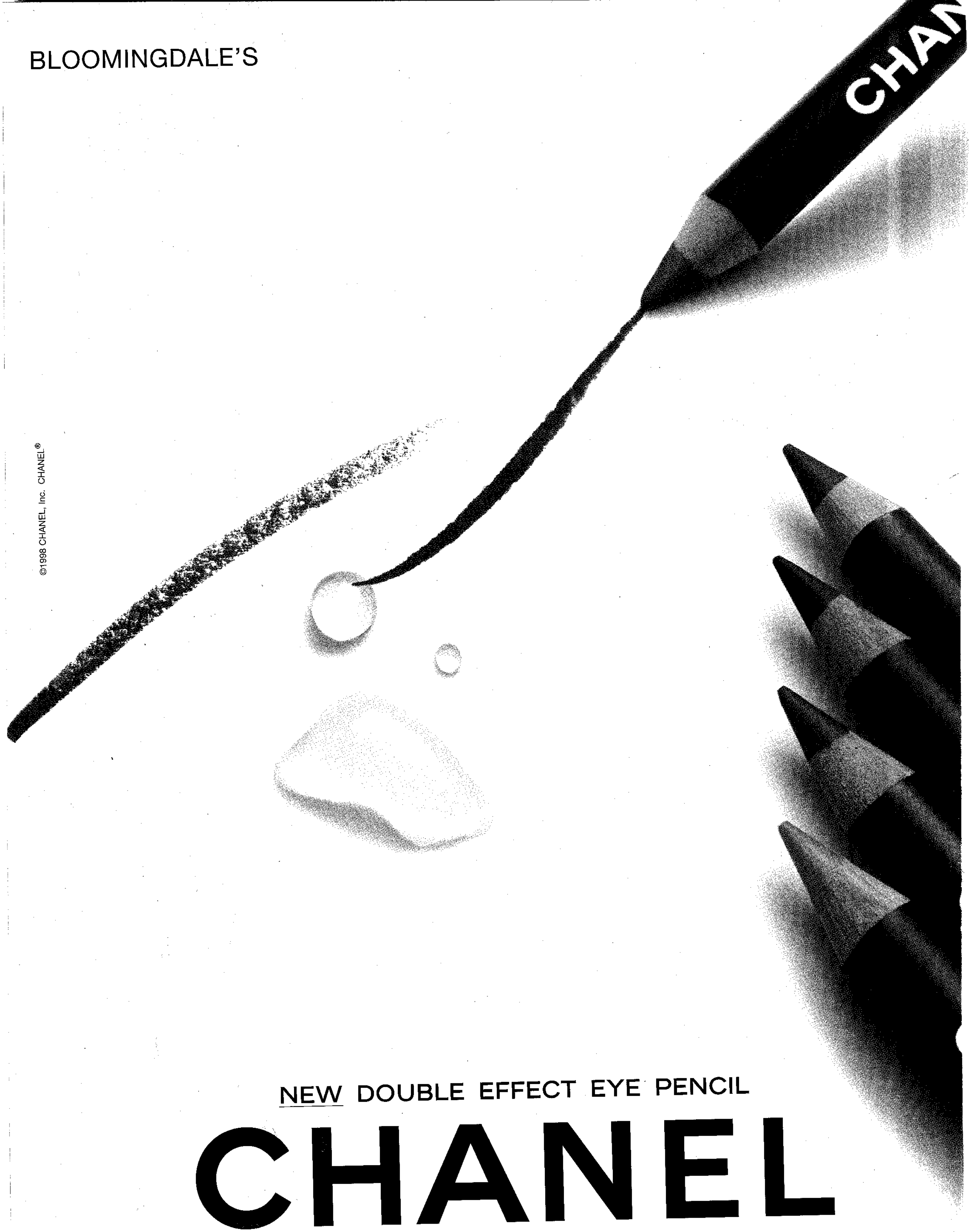

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